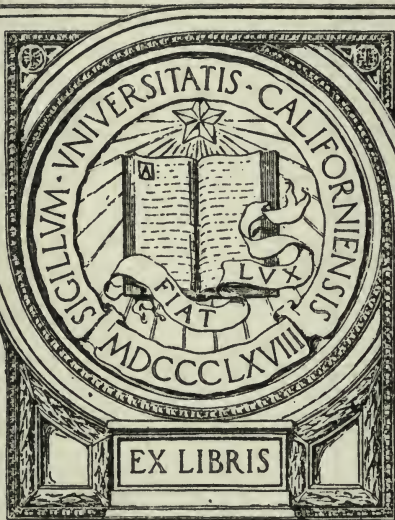




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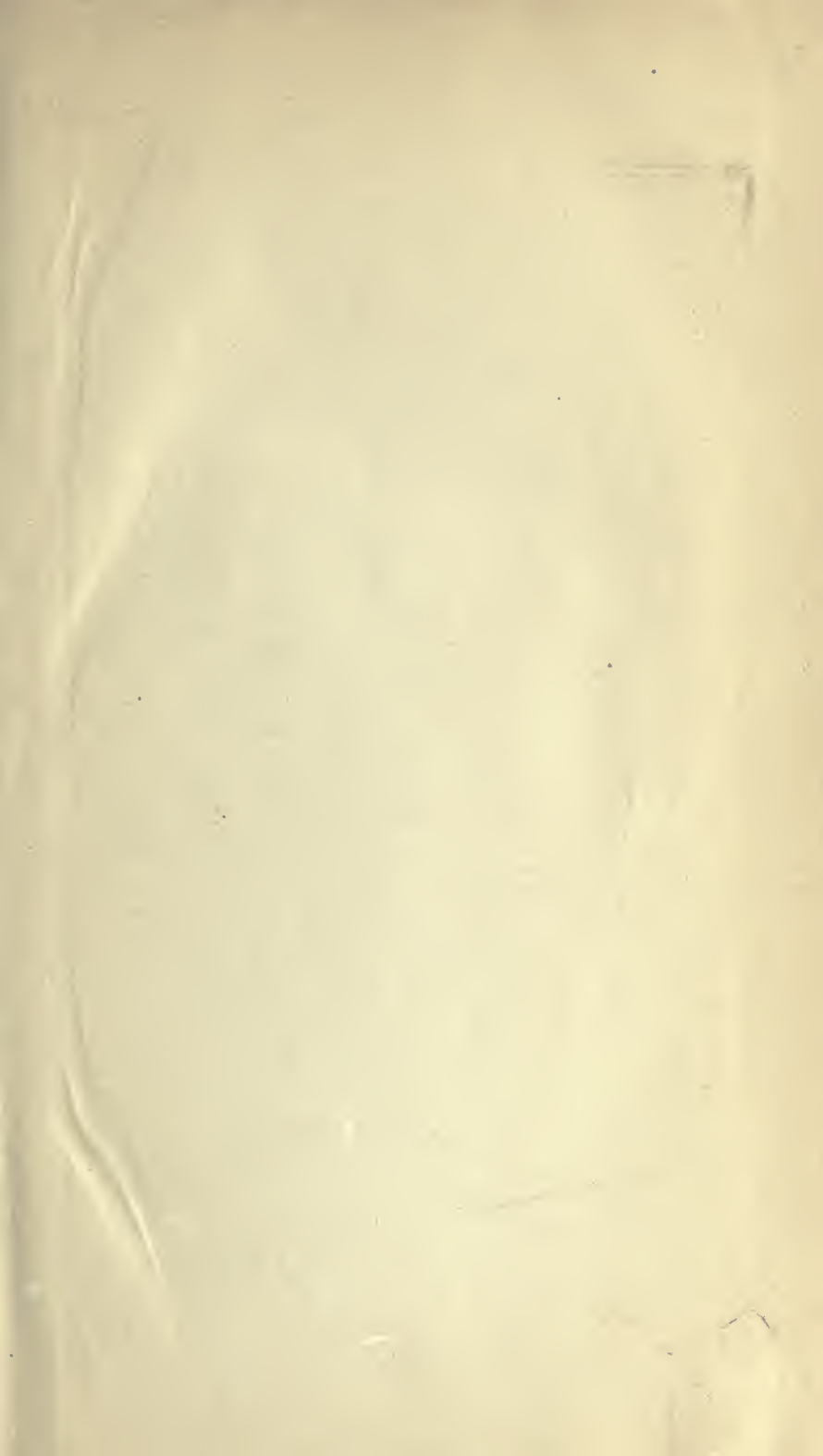


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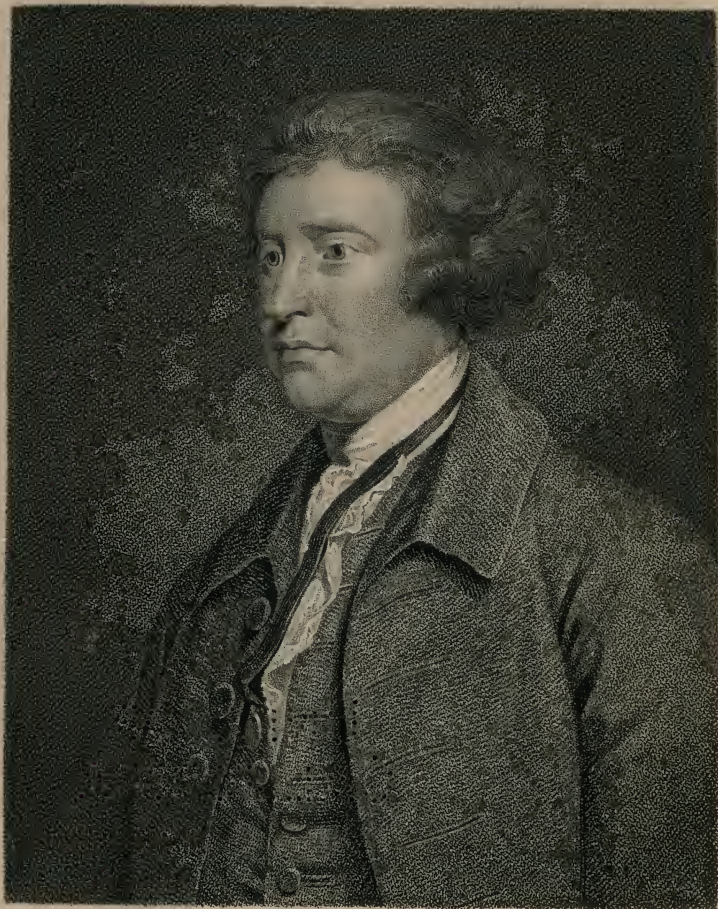




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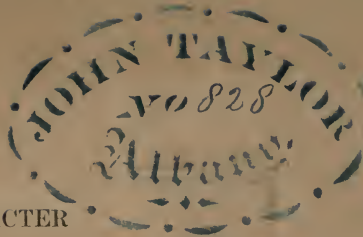
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THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE.

*Engraved by W. Hill from a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.*





MEMOIR

OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE,

WITH SPECIMENS OF

HIS POETRY AND LETTERS,

AND AN

ESTIMATE OF HIS GENIUS AND TALENTS,

COMPARED WITH THOSE OF HIS

GREAT CONTEMPORARIES.

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BY JAMES PRIOR, Esq.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

H. AND E. SHEFFIELD, 132. FLEET STREET.

1839.

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TO THE  
LIBRARY OF THE  
MUSEUM OF  
ART AND ARCHITECTURE  
OF THE CITY OF LONDON

**PHELAN**

TO

JOHN WILSON CROKER, Esq.,

L.L.D. F.R.S. M.P. &c. &c. &c.

SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

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SIR,

AN attempt to sketch the life and character of one of the greatest men of modern times may, with peculiar propriety, be addressed to one of his distinguished countrymen, who is himself connected, not only with that part of Ireland where Mr. Burke spent his earlier years, but also with his family; who likewise acquired his relish for learning in the same venerable academic retreat; who possesses much of his taste, much of his acknowledged love for the Fine Arts, much of his literary talents, and no ordinary share of his laborious devotion to public business.

That it is wholly worthy of your acceptance, or of the memory of the distinguished man of whom it treats, I am by no means vain enough to believe. To render full justice to his various genius and acquirements,

would demand some of his own powers. No wonder therefore, if, under so illustrious a burden, *my* pen should break down. But the intention, at least, may be excused by the admirers of a statesman, whom to remember is to honour; and whom to honour is but another name by which to express our reverence for those venerable institutions of our country, which, as forming its pride and boast, he laboured so strenuously to defend; and which, through their influence on the national spirit, proved the salvation of Europe in the great struggle, now happily past. I have the honour to be, Sir,

With much respect,

Your most faithful

And obedient Servant,

JAMES PRIOR.



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## ADVERTISEMENT

TO

### THE SECOND EDITION.

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IN presenting a second and much enlarged edition of this work to the public, the writer cannot omit to express his acknowledgments for the favourable reception experienced by the first; not only from the periodical censors of literature who assume to guide the public taste, but from the private testimonies of approbation afforded by persons of the very first consideration and talents in the country, whose opinions would seem to be confirmed by the sale of a large impression of the work in no very considerable space of time.

This encouragement naturally induced a corresponding diligence on his part, to endeavour, by every available means, to add to its interest and correctness; and the inquiry and research resorted to with this view, though laborious, have not, it will be perceived, been in vain. The additional matter collected, almost the whole of which is original, adds a second volume to the work, and has necessarily caused a new arrangement in many parts for its introduction in the order of time, while

other passages are wholly re-written ; so that the work may be considered almost as new. This plan he conceived to be much more systematic and desirable than merely to give a supplemental volume of disjointed letters, anecdotes, and fragments thrown together without any bond of coherence or connexion.

For the information thus received the writer is indebted to a variety of sources, upon which he can place implicit reliance. Some of these are noticed in the progress of the volumes : while several persons to whom he is obliged think it obtrusive or unnecessary to give their names to the world upon circumstances of lighter moment in themselves, or which carry with them in substance a sufficient guarantee of authenticity. He should be ungrateful, however, not to avow in a particular manner his acknowledgments to the Hon. Sir William C. Smith, Bart., F. R. S., Second Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland, for the documents with which he has been obliging enough to favour him, while he has to regret that one of them, the "Recollections," did not arrive in sufficient time to be inserted in chronological order, although the reader will meet with it at the conclusion of the work. He is likewise indebted for some contributions to the late Mr. James Gomme, F. S. A., who died shortly after they were communicated. But more especially his thanks are due to Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, the nephew and nearest surviving relative of Mr. Burke, and no less near to him in the virtues of the heart than in blood ; and who, from the satisfaction which the writer has derived from his personal acquaintance, he must consider to require only a little more time and opportunities to display no inconsiderable portion of the talents of his family. For

this public avowal of his sentiments, the author claims his indulgence; as in making it he fears to offend that unpretending merit whose value rises in the esteem of every competent judge by the unobtrusive spirit with which it is accompanied. He has been kind enough to supply every document and information in his power for these volumes.

To advert to the various criticisms passed upon the work will not be thought necessary, further than to acknowledge the conciliatory and approving spirit in which they are generally couched; while it is satisfactory to find that the plan, which the author originally chalked out to himself, of touching very briefly upon the parliamentary and other great public labours of Mr. Burke, which are already embodied in the history of the country as well as in other works of general interest and of course accessible to every description of reader, has been likewise approved.

Much of this favour to the author personally, is doubtless owing to the great popularity of his subject with the best informed and reflecting order of men. But it is not to be denied, that there is in this country a considerable number of politicians, who, from some original obliquity of judgment, or peculiarity of opinion upon certain constitutional points, persist in censuring the conduct of Mr. Burke for the part he took on the question of the French Revolution, although it might be supposed that observation and the progress of events, independent of all argument, had confirmed the accuracy of his views on that matter beyond further cavil or dispute.

It was not therefore with any great degree of surprise that he lately saw an attempt, under cover of a criticism

on his book, to maintain that Mr. Burke was so far mistaken in his assertion of there being no good likely to result from the Revolution, that France had at length acquired by it that freedom for which she had so long contended. This statement of the matter is quite a perversion of his argument. He never said, or thought of saying, that she was condemned to such a state of perpetual, irreversible slavery, that no accident could extricate her from it. What he really said and enforced was, that her Revolution, of which she was at first so proud, contained no one principle of which a wise or good man could approve; that all its acts, means, and purposes were equally indefensible; and that, *of itself*, it was not likely to lead to any system of national freedom. Experience has taught us that it *did not* of itself introduce, or attempt to introduce, any such system.

As to the other clause in the critic's remark, about France having contended for the establishment of her constitutional freedom, it is so notoriously contrary to fact, that the wonder has been how perseveringly she struggled against it. She never, in fact, seriously set about seeking it; neither did she, by the exertion of any wisdom, talent, or intelligence of her own, win it. The freedom, or at least the rudiments of freedom, which she now enjoys, was thrust upon her. A series of unexpected and fortuitous circumstances, which she not only did not forward, but on the contrary opposed by every means in her power, led to the production and establishment of the Charter. That important measure, therefore, so far from being her own work, was the work of the combined armies of Europe.

It may be doubted, indeed, whether she ever possessed any clear conception of the blessings of a free constitu-



tion, or understood anything about how it was to be introduced or managed. For with the example of England before her, which might be considered a sufficient guard against committing gross mistakes, she plunged every succeeding year from her first efforts deeper and deeper into error; floundering from simple financial embarrassments into general anarchy, from anarchy into a system of the bloodiest massacre and tyranny, from this into the crude and impracticable scheme of a directory, from a directory into a mawkish imitation of the consular government of ancient Rome, and from this product of folly into the next and natural stage, a grinding military despotism. In all this series of changes there was no approach to the establishment of consistent, steady, practical liberty. And at the beginning of 1814 she had neither in fact nor in appearance advanced one step nearer to obtaining it, than in 1714, or any other period of her history, nor was likely so to do, had not the wild ambition of her ruler provoked his own downfall and led to the general change in her institutions. Consequently, France has no claim whatever to be considered her own liberator; she struggled hard, on the contrary, to continue enslaved, and was at length only drubbed out of her chains. And a constitutional system, the most valuable present that could possibly be made to any nation, worth more than all the conquests she ever effected, had she been permitted to retain them all, has been the voluntary gift of her conquerors.

So little, therefore, did her revolution, with all its spoliations, proscriptions, terrors, massacres, and wars, for more than twenty-two years, effect for its nominal aim—that of giving freedom and security to her people.

And so fully was the anticipation of Mr. Burke verified, that an event which inflicted and permitted so many evils, could scarcely, if left to itself, be productive of good.

The Addenda contain some particulars which were mislaid during the progress of the work ; and likewise a few others which came to hand too late to be inserted in their proper places.\*

\* In the present edition, the whole of the Addenda are inserted in their proper places.



## P R E F A C E.

---

FEW things interest the curiosity of mankind more, or prove so instructive in themselves, as to trace the progress of a powerful mind, by the honourable exertion of its native energies, rising amid serious obstructions and difficulties from a very private condition to stations of public eminence and trust, and in its progress acquiring the power to rule, or to influence, the destiny of nations.

Such a person, as sprung not from the privileged few, but from among the mass of the people, we feel to be one of ourselves. Our sympathies go along with him in his career. The young imagine that it may possibly be their own case; the old, with a glance of retrospective regret, may fancy, that with a little more of the favour of fortune it might have been theirs; and at any rate we are anxious to ascertain the causes of his superiority, to treasure up his experience, to profit by what he experienced to be useful, to avoid what he found to be disadvantageous. And the lesson becomes doubly instructive to that large class of society who are born to be the architects of their own fortune, when it impresses the great moral truth, that natural endowments, however great, receive their highest polish and power, their only secure reward, from diligent study—from continued, unwearied application—a plain, homely faculty within the reach of all men; one whose fruits, as they bear testimony at once to the industry of the possessor, and to the intrinsic value of the possession, are above all others likely to wear well. Of the great results of such endowments, fostered and directed by such cultivation, we have not a more distinguished example than Edmund Burke.

To an attentive reader of our political and literary history during the sixty years that are past, no name will more frequently attract his attention, whether we consider the large space he occupied in the public eye, the original genius he possessed, the diversified talents he displayed, the great events with which the whole of his public life was connected, and the alternate eulogy and abuse by which, particularly since the period of the French Revolution, his reputation has been assailed.

Two biographies of this remarkable man have been written; one of them a quarto volume of slander, dictated by the most envenomed party spirit, and probably meant at the moment to answer some party purpose; the other, more just to his deserts; but both very deficient in facts, and especially so as to his earlier life, very little being stated, or indeed known of him, until his connexion with the Marquis of Rockingham, and subsequent entry into Parliament. Obvious as this deficiency in political biography was, accident alone suggested to the present writer the attempt to clear up part of this obscurity. Contemplating his qualities, both natural and acquired, and his career at large, as very extraordinary and successful, he drew up a character of him at some length in the autumn of 1819, which being thrown by for above two years without further notice, came then under the examination of a friend, who recommended that it should be enlarged and altered from the form it then bore: for that many parts as it stood would be obscure to the general reader, many be liable to mistake or misapplication, and some nearly unintelligible, if not grounded upon a memoir. This additional labour was undertaken certainly without regret. Some new materials were already in the writer's hands, and by application to various friends in England and Ireland, a variety of others, chiefly unknown to the world, and of undoubted authenticity, were procured; and, as illustrative of the opinions, the criticisms, and the style of correspondence, as well of the friendly as of the more formal description of his principal, a few of his letters have been added, several of them little or not at all familiar to the public eye.

An extended biography, embracing a minute exposition of all his labours in Parliament, in Westminster Hall on the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, or in the press, together with details respecting American, India, French, or other important public affairs with which he was much concerned, was not deemed necessary. It may be said, indeed, that to write the life of a great statesman and orator, without giving the substance of his speeches in the great council of the nation, is scarcely to do him justice; and, were they not to be found elsewhere, the remark would be just. But these make part of the history of the country. A few of the principal of them, given at length, are to be found in his works; and the remainder may be seen, although in a very imperfect form indeed, as all such things must be when reporting was imperfect and publication wholly interdicted, in the four volumes collected and published (for Longman and Co.) by a different editor in 1816. And independent of this, the appalling form of two, three, or even more quartos, to which such a design would inevitably extend, was sufficient of itself to deter the writer from any such attempt, bearing in mind the observation of the eminent subject of his sketch, that "a great book is a great evil." His aim was, therefore, not to make a great book, but a compact one; to condense within a moderate compass all that was necessary to be known, and which many readers would decline to seek in the more ponderous forms just mentioned. In doing this, he thought it better simply to allude to the chief public exertions of Mr. Burke, accompanied by a few words of explanation or illustration, sometimes drawn from himself, rather than to aim at entering into their details.

Great as is the reputation of this eminent man, it stands, so far as party feelings are concerned, in rather a singular predicament. It is well known that he would not go all lengths with any body of men, and constantly declined to fall in with any popular humour, of whose tendency he had the smallest doubt, although a contrary plan would have insured to him, as it did to others, a great increase of popularity; that he had an utter abhorrence of any thing resembling the undue exercise of



power or arrogant domination, no matter from what quarter it proceeded; and that, by endeavouring to preserve a certain balance of powers in the state, as well as in different orders of the community, and in the different interests, religious, political, and commercial, of the kingdom, by stepping in to the assistance of the weak against the strong, which is beyond dispute the duty of honest patriotism and sound wisdom, he incurred censure from the more violent or domineering of every class. He was assailed by the zealots of power for opposing the coercion of America, and for prosecuting Mr. Hastings; by the zealots of licentious freedom for opposing the French Revolution; by zealots in religion for advocating the cause of the dissenters and Roman Catholics; and by zealots of various descriptions in affairs of less moment. Many other reasons might be adduced why he was not always at the head of that party whose cause he chiefly espoused; the chief of which perhaps were, that he wanted that consequence from birth, fortune, and family connexion, which, along with great abilities, and some amiable private qualities, centred in Mr. Fox.

While, therefore, the two great divisions in politics of Whig and Tory, the former more especially, have deemed it a species of display of their allegiance to endeavour to depress his name for the purpose of exalting those of their particular leaders: and a more violent, though small body, known under various harsh and odious appellations unnecessary to be repeated here, have sworn a kind of eternal enmity to his name, for the overthrow which their doctrines experienced at his hands during the revolutionary fever in France, no special party remained, on whom devolved the obligation of upholding his fame. The old Whig connexion, indeed, of which he was so long the tongue and the soul, ought to have performed this duty, but they either wanted vigour, or had become merged in other parties. Depreciation and abuse from his political adversaries have in consequence been suffered to remain uncontradicted. If he did not write and speak himself into repute, nobody else perhaps can do it for him; nobody else certainly has attempted it. He has been left to the buoyancy of his own merits; to

sink or swim in public opinion by his intrinsic powers. "For what I have been," said he, "I put myself upon my country;" and among the educated and dispassionate part of it he has no reason to complain of the decision. He has worked his way into general esteem, not by the applauding pens of intoxicated followers, but by more eloquent though less noisy advocates; by the slow but steady and sure evolution of national sentiment, by the living and flourishing evidences to his deserts, of a constitution preserved from demolition or inroad, an unshaken throne, an unpolluted altar, an unplundered nobility and gentry, and the continuance of those moral ties and habitudes which bind together and form the safeguard of the whole.

Misrepresentation, indeed, may answer its end for a time. And were it not indicative of something of a malevolent feeling, it would be sometimes amusing to observe the ignorance or prejudice respecting the sentiments of Mr. Burke on a variety of public matters which prevails among many persons, who at a venture attribute to him any thing that happens to be unpopular at the moment—circumstances in which he had no participation or interest, and principles which he repeatedly opposed and disclaimed. In this spirit a reverend president of a political society at Liverpool not long ago stigmatised him as a deserter from the cause of parliamentary reform: and more than one of the orators of the Common Council of London, amid a few other flying reproaches just as much founded in truth, repeated the accusation. At two or three of the county meetings held some time back, he was spoken of as a sinecure placeman, and an enemy to liberty. At one of the largest book establishments in London, on inquiring for a volume in which it happened to be said there was something concerning him, "a satire, sir, I suppose," was the reply; as if satire was the legitimate coin with which his public labours deserved to be repaid.\* In a private company of that consideration

\* A similar circumstance occurred again to the writer very lately at one (the very first perhaps) of these establishments. A volume containing some remarks upon him being handed down,—“He was an extraordinary man,” observed the biblioplist, “but like all the rest of them, ready to change his

in society in which the writer least expected to hear observations thrown out of an illiberal or wholly untrue description, the motives of Mr. Burke in the impeachment of Mr. Hastings were sharply arraigned by some members of what is called the *Indian interest*, though on being pushed for facts, none of the party could assign any thing like an improper motive. In another company, less select, but of some consideration, he was admitted to be a most surprising man, but unhappily opposed to the reformation of all abuses in government. In a third, he was an ingenious and able writer, but *too flowery* in his style. In a fourth, his political conduct was said to be regulated by regard merely to his own interests. In a fifth, probably from the want of some better handle for censure, it was gravely urged as a drawback upon his fame, that he originally possessed no private property; nay, that he was humble enough to receive the profits of his literary labours, and that at length he accepted of a pension;—so that, by this ingenious and discriminating effort of logic, the original sin charged against him of want of fortune was not permitted to be remedied, either by the fair exertion of those talents with which Providence had endowed him, or by the public gratitude of his country. All these circumstances came lately under the eye and ear of the writer. They are samples of what is heard every day in the ill-read, or ill-considered, remarks of drawing-rooms and tea-tables; and are only worthy of notice as coming occasionally from persons who assume a lead in conversation, and who would have felt not a little indignant at being told, what was nevertheless fact, that they were disseminating untruths or nonsense.

Another order of persons, of more influence and information, chiefly of the class of public writers, who have in view to exalt another great political name,† think it

opinions when it suited his purpose.”—These people keep books, but do not read them.—Yet the estimate usually formed of the characters of all statesmen (some of the first living names came in, on this occasion, for a share of the censure) by persons who pass among their acquaintance as being sensible and well informed, is commonly of this description.

† Mr. Fox.



necessary for the accomplishment of their purpose to lower, though indirectly and circuitously, the reputation of Mr. Burke.

From these persons we hear of him frequently as a man of great genius, of many acquirements, of brilliant fancy, and amusing talents; carefully keeping out of view, as if they were wholly unknown, those more useful and more profound qualities of mind which constitute his chief claims to distinction. Sometimes, again, he is what they are pleased to term a philosophical politician, meaning by this to imply something different from a practical statesman; sometimes he is even admitted to be the greatest writer of the age, while scarcely an allusion is made to that parliamentary eloquence which made his name as an orator more celebrated on the continent of Europe, while he continued in the House of Commons, than those of either of his great rivals, and which enabled him to take the lead for so many years in that assembly, besides drawing the then (1774) very unusual honour of an invitation to represent, free of expense, one of the chief cities of the kingdom. At other times, hints are dropped, of how much better his genius would have been exerted in many other ways than in politics. This opinion is at best but mere assumption and trifling. For though doubtless calculated to excel in any thing to which he vigorously applied his mind, we have no right to speculate on what he might have been, but what he really was. And his whole career proves, that, added to an early bias towards the consideration of public affairs, there is perhaps little doubt but that more of the strength of his mind was put forth by the contentions inseparable from politics than could have been effected by any other species of discussion. But independent of this, if he has left behind in the track of life which he ultimately adopted, more materials for fame than either of his contemporaries or predecessors, namely, the finest orations in the English language, the ablest political disquisitions, the introduction or support of a series of important constitutional measures for nearly thirty years together, and a reputation perhaps above any other for practical wisdom, not resting on the mere opinion of the moment, but

on record in his speeches and writings;—surely it savours of folly or impertinence to say, that he would have succeeded better in any other pursuit.

It is time that this ungenerous warfare against his fame should cease. No man, indeed, intimately conversant with public affairs, has been misled by it, as the debates in parliament almost every night of every session testify; but it has served its turn pretty effectually among that multitude of persons who are little acquainted with such matters, and who, suspecting no sinister views, take for granted what is told them without undergoing the labour of inquiring for themselves. Should the present attempt enable any of these to appreciate more justly the powers or character of one to whom his country is under very important obligations, the writer will not deem his labour misapplied. *His* testimony at least is impartial. He has no party purpose to answer; no influence to court; no interest to push, except it be that common interest felt by every generous mind, of rendering to a distinguished and virtuous character those honours which are its due.

*List of the chief Writings of the Right Hon. EDMUND BURKE, arranged, as nearly as possible, in Chronological Order, and with Reference to the Volumes of his Works (Svo. edit.) in which they may be found.*

It may be necessary to observe, that the speeches, and notes of speeches, enumerated in the following catalogue, are such only as have a place in his works published by his executors. Four volumes of speeches, most of them not inserted in his Works, have been collected, and given to the world by a different Editor; and though necessarily imperfect, as being taken from casual and unauthorized reports, when reporting was at a low ebb, they are probably the best that can now be procured.

The letters specified in this enumeration are all upon public affairs; some of them published soon after being written, some not; and the greater number forming pamphlets of considerable size.

The pieces marked thus (\*\*\*) are likewise not included in his Works, though no doubt is entertained of their authenticity.

POETRY.

- \*\*\*Translation of an Idyllium of Theocritus . . . about 1744.  
 \*\*Several Scenes of a Play, on the Subject of Alfred  
 the Great . . . . . ibid.  
 \*\*Ballitore, a short Poem . . . . . 1745.  
 \*\*Lines on the River Blackwater . . . . . 1745.  
 \*\*\*Translation of the concluding Portion of the 2d  
 Georgic of Virgil . . . . . 1746.  
 \*\*Lines to Mr. Richard Shackleton, on his Marriage  
 1748.  
 \*\*And several shorter Pieces, still known to be in ex-  
 istence.



## MISCELLANEOUS.

	In what Vol. contained.
Hints for an Essay on the Drama . . . . about 1754.	X
Vindication of Natural Society . . . . . 1756.	I
Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful . . . . . 1756.	I
**An Account of the European Settlements in Ame- rica, 2 vols. 8vo. . . . . 1757.	
Essay towards an Abridgment of English History, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the End of the Reign of King John . . . . . 1757.	X
**Annual Register †—at first the whole Work, after- wards only the Historical Article . . . . . 1758, &c.	
Fragments of a Tract (75 octavo pages) on the Popery Laws in Ireland . . . . . 1761.	IX
Short Account of a late Short Administration . . . 1766.	II
**Humorous Reply to the preceding, signed Whit- tington, a Tallow Chandler, of Cateaton-street; and Ship News for 1765—both believed to be Mr. Burke's . . . . . 1766.	
Observations on a late Publication, intituled the Pre- sent State of the Nation . . . . . 1769.	II
Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents . 1773.	II
**Idea of a Perfect Wife . . . . . 1770.	
Notes of a Speech on the Middlesex Election, Feb. 1771.	X
————— a Bill for explaining the Powers of Juries in Prosecutions for Libel . March 1771.	X
Letters on the same Subject for the Newspapers . 1770.	X
Notes of a Speech on the Acts of Uniformity . Feb. 1772.	X
————— a Bill to quiet the Possessions of the Subject against Dormant Claims of the Church . . . . . Feb. 1772.	X
————— for the Relief of certain Protestant	

† Doubts being still expressed of his participation in this publication, fac-similes of his hand-writing of the receipts for the copy-money of the volume for 1761, are given at page 52.

	In what Vol. contained.
Dissenters . . . . .	1773. X
_____ on a Bill for shortening the Dura- tion of Parliament . . . . .	1773. X
Letter on the Irish Absentee Tax, to Sir Charles Bingham . . . . .	Oct. 1773. IX
Speech on American Taxation . . . . .	April 1774. II
Speeches at Bristol . . . . .	Nov. 1774. III
Speech on American Conciliation. . . . .	March 1775. III
Letter to the Marquis of Rockingham, on the propos- ed Secession from Parliament of Members who opposed the American War . . . . .	Jan. 1777. ix
Address to the King—Address to the British Colo- nists in North America; both on the same Sub- ject . . . . .	1777. IX
Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol . . . . .	April 1777. III
Letter to the Hon. C. J. Fox, on Political Affairs Oct. 1777.	IX
**Epitaph on Mr. Dowdeswell . . . . .	1778. 184
Two Letters to Gentlemen at Bristol, on Bills relative to the Trade of Ireland . . . . .	April and May 1778. III
Letter to the Right Hon. Edmund Pery, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, on a Bill for the Relief of the Roman Catholics of Ireland . July 1778.	IX
Letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq., in Vindication of the Author's Parliamentary Conduct relative to the Affairs of Ireland . . . . .	Jan. 1780. IX.
Speech on Economical Reform . . . . .	Feb. 1780. III
Letter to John Merlott, Esq., on the Affairs of Ireland April 1780.	IX
Letter to the Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Meet- ing for procuring Parliamentary Reform . April 1780.	IX
Sketch of a Code of Laws for the Regulation of the Slave Trade, and the Government of the Negroes in the West India Islands . . . . .	1780. IX
Letters and Reflections on the Execution of the Rioters July 1780.	IX
Speeches at Bristol . . . . .	Sept. 1780. III
Notes of a Speech on the Marriage Act . . . . .	June 1781. X
Letter to Lord Kenmare on the Penal Laws against	

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the Roman Catholics of Ireland . . . . .	Feb. 1782. VI
Notes of a Speech on a Motion for Reform in the Representation of the Commons . . . . .	May 1782. X
Ninth Report from a Committee of the House of Commons, on the Administration of Justice in the Provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa . . . . .	June 1783. XI
Eleventh Report from the same; both intended, prob- ably to pave the way for the India Bill . . . . .	1783. XI
**Letter to James Barry, Esq., Professor of Painting, Royal Academy, on the Subject of his Pictures, exhibiting in the Great Room of the Society of Arts . . . . .	August 1783.
Speech on the East India Bill . . . . .	Dec. 1783. IV
Representation to His Majesty . . . . .	moved June 14, 1784. IV
**Epitaph on Sir George Savile, Bart. . . . .	1784.
Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts . . . . .	Feb. 1785. IV
Articles of Charge of High Crimes and Misdemea- nours against Warren Hastings, Esq., late Go- vernor General of Bengal . . . . .	April 1786. XI & XII
**Epitaph upon, or Character of, the Marquis of Rockingham . . . . .	1787.
Speeches on the opening of the Impeachment of Mr. Hastings, February 15th, 16th, 17th, and 19th, occupying about four hours each day . . . . .	1788. XIII
Speeches on the Sixth Article of Charge, April 21st, 25th, May 5th, and 7th . . . . .	1789. XIII & XIV
**A variety of Letters and Papers (public) on the Re- gency Question . . . . .	1781, 1789.
**Letter to Mr. Pitt (as from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales), on the Subject of the Re- gency . . . . .	Jan. 1789.
**Letter to Mr. Montague, on the Subject of the Im- peachment of Mr. Hastings . . . . .	April 1789.
**Letters to M. Menonville, on the French Revolution Oct. 1789.	Oct. 1789.
Substance of a Speech on the Army Estimates, Feb. 1790.	V
**Letter to Thomas Mercer, Esq. on the Subject of the French Revolution . . . . .	Feb. 1790.
Reflections on the Revolution in France . . . . .	Oct. 1790. V



	In what Vol. contained.
**Character of Henry IV. of France . . . . .	Jan. 1791.
Letter to a Member of the National Assembly, Jan. 1791.	VI
Hints for a Memorial to M. Montmorin . . . . .	Feb. 1791. VII
Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs . . . . .	July 1791. VI
Letter to the Empress of Russia . . . . .	Nov. 1791. IX
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Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Bart. M.P., on the Subject of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, Jan. 1792.	VI
**Character of Sir Joshua Reynolds . . . . .	Feb. 1792.
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**Appeal to Public Benevolence in Favour of the Destitute French Clergy . . . . .	Sept. 1792.
Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs . . . . .	Nov. 1792. VII
Letter to Richard Burke, Esq. (his son), on the Sub- ject of the Popery Laws of Ireland . . . . .	1793. IX
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Report from the Committee appointed to inspect the Lords' Journals relative to their Proceeding on the Trial of Warren Hastings, Esq.—Ordered on the 5th and 17th of March; and this impor- tant and elaborate Paper, of nearly 200 octavo pages, was produced by Mr. Burke . 30th April 1794.	XIV
Continuation of Speeches on the Impeachment of Mr. Hastings :—Reply . . . . .	1794. XV & XVI
Letter to William Smith, Esq. M.P. (now one of the Barons of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland), on the Subject of the Popery Laws . . . . .	Jan. 1795. IX
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Letter to William Elliott, Esq. occasioned by a Speech in the House of Lords by the *** of *** (Duke of Norfolk) . . . . .	May 1795. VII
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## CHAPTER I.

Family and Birth of Mr. Burke—The Nagles—Castletown Roche School-master—Ballitore—Anecdotes—Studies, and Poetical Exercises at College—Literary Society in Dublin—First Political Writings—Entry at the Middle Temple.

EDMUND BURKE, the most extraordinary man perhaps of an age fertile in extraordinary men, and in many respects the greatest whom Ireland has produced, was descended from a respectable family long settled in the county of Galway,\* whence it removed to the county of Limerick, and once had possession of a considerable estate in the latter, but which became forfeited during one of those civil convulsions that have so often caused property to change possessors in that country. This took place some time in the troubled period between 1641 and 1653.

The Burkes or Bourkes, though now thickly strewed over the whole of Ireland, particularly the southern part of it, were not an aboriginal, or, as their English invaders termed them, a *mere Irish* family; but descended from the Norman Burghs, or De Burghs, (of which Burke is merely a corruption,) who went thither as adventurers under Strongbow, in the reign of Henry II.; not as temporary marauders whose visitations might soon be over, but to conquer an inheritance,—to seize upon such possessions as their strength would permit, and permanently to hold what they had thus seized.

An ancestor of Mr. Burke's family is said to have been Mayor of the city of Limerick in 1646, when it was occupied by a native military force, which seeming disinclined to receive either the parliamentary army, or that under the Marquis of Ormond who aimed at securing it for Charles I. in whose interest the Irish army professed to be, the Mayor exerted himself vigorously in favour of the royal cause. A popular riot however ensued, instigated by the intrigues of the Papal Nuncio, who, though professing devotion to the same cause, had some other ambitious purposes to answer; and Burke was not only roughly handled at the moment, but lost much of his property, was deposed from his office and imprisoned, his place being filled by a Monk, who led on the rioters.

\* The late Earl of Clanricarde, John Smyth de Burgh, (a Galway family) frequently addressed Mr. Burke as "Cousin."

The great grandfather of Edmund, possessing some property in the county of Cork, retired thither, and subsequently settled near to the village of Castletown Roche, the seat of the Roche family, prettily situated, and distinguished in the civil wars for having been defended in 1649 by Lady Roche against the parliamentary forces; which, with other offences of a similar kind by her husband, caused his outlawry, and the forfeiture of the family estates. The village stands about four or five miles from Donnéraile, five or six from Mallow, and nearly about the same distance from the ruined old castle of Kilcolman, the residence, for a considerable time, of the poet Spenser, where he was frequently visited by Sir Walter Raleigh, and other eminent characters, of the reign of Elizabeth, connected with Ireland, and where he wrote the whole or the greater part of the "Fairy Queen." To the abode of the poet in this district of legends and tales, may be attributed some of the beauties of that great work; the innumerable superstitions and romantic traditions of the surrounding country unquestionably supplying him with numberless hints for that purpose; and to which, in more than one part of his writings, he indirectly alludes.

This property continuing in the Burke family, came into the possession of Edmund in 1765 on the death of his elder brother Garret, who died on the 27th April in that year, and lies buried on the spot. It was sold by him in 1792 or 1793 for something less than 4000*l.*: the annual value at that period was under 300*l.*, but of late it has produced above 700*l.* per annum.

His father Richard Burke, or Bourke,\* as it was often indiscriminately spelt, was a Protestant, and educated for an attorney. Removing from Limerick, where he resided for some time, to Dublin, he took a house on Arran Quay, then a fashionable part of the town, and soon obtaining extensive practice, continued for several years in the first rank of his profession in that city. At an early period, he had become attached to a juvenile acquaintance, a Miss Nagle, of the respectable family of that name, still existing near Castletown Roche, and descended from the Attorney General to James II. To this lady he was married, at Mallow, about the year 1725 or 1726, and by her became the father of fourteen or fifteen children, all of whom died young except Garret, Edmund, Richard, a daughter named Juliana, baptized in 1728,† and married to a Mr. French, a gentleman of respectability in the county of Galway. This lady possessed no ordinary talents. In the words of a gentleman (a member of the Irish Bar), who knew her long and intimately, to the writer,

\* Many families still use the latter orthography, particularly that of the Earls of Mayo, the founder of which, also a Richard Bourke and LL.D. died in 1727.

† The following is a copy of the Church Register, Castletown Roche Parish, diocese of Cloyne:—

"Juliana, daughter of Richard and Mary Burke, baptized 1728.—God-father Edw. Fitton—God-mothers Mary Dunworth, Mary Nayler."



“Mrs. French, had nature destined her for the other sex, would have been as great an orator as her brother Edmund. In her conversation there was so much of elegance as well as of ability, that I often remarked it would have been difficult to transpose a word to advantage.” Educated in the belief of her mother, as is commonly the case with females in Ireland where the parents are of different religious persuasions, she was a rigid Roman Catholic, exemplary in her duties, and kind and charitable to her poorer neighbours. On Christmas Day, in every year, she was accustomed to invite the halt, maimed, blind, and distressed of every description in the vicinity to a plentiful repast, in which she waited on them herself as a servant. “It is right,” said she, “to humble ourselves now and then, and what day so appropriate for this duty as the anniversary of that on which our Saviour humbled himself so far as to take the form of man, in order to confer upon him the highest benefit.”

Garret, who followed his father's profession and was well known in Dublin as a man of wit and drollery, died unmarried. Richard, who became equally distinguished in London as a wit, a politician, a writer, and a lawyer, in which latter capacity Lord Mansfield had formed and expressed to several members of the bar now living, the highest opinion of him, and of whom some notices will hereafter occur, likewise died unmarried. The issue of Mrs. French alone survive; her grandson, Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, being the lineal representative of the family. With the descendants of the late Mr. John Nugent, Mrs. Burke's brother, a remote relationship to Mr. Burke by blood, as stated by that family, also exists; he having married Miss Lucy Nagle, daughter of Garret Nagle, Esq. of Moneamyny and Ballyduff, in Cork, first cousin on both father and mother's side to Edmund Burke. It is worthy of remark, that Sylvanus Spenser, elder son of the Poet, married Ellen Nagle, elder daughter of David Nagle, Esq. ancestor of the gentleman just mentioned, and great aunt to Mr. Burke's mother; so that marriage remotely connected these two celebrated names.

For his maternal relations, among whom many of his juvenile days were spent, Edmund always preserved a warm regard; and as several were devoted to various departments of the public service, advanced their interests as opportunities permitted. Among these was the present Admiral, Sir Edmund Nagle; who spending much of his time at Beaconsfield in the intervals of sea-duty, amused his celebrated kinsman with naval anecdotes and affairs, in which the latter took so much interest, as to have acquired a large stock of nautical terms, often applied with great effect in his speeches and writings; while in return the young sailor received warm applause for several instances of gallant conduct. One of these Mr. Burke dwelt upon with peculiar delight to his friends; remarking that in ancient Rome it would



have obtained, not only a civic crown for the humanity displayed on the occasion, but a laurel crown for the courage. A person, it seems, had accidentally fallen overboard from a ship at sea in which Mr. Nagle was embarked, who finding he was in danger from a shark, which had just before been seen near the ship, immediately sprung into the water to rescue him, and happily succeeded. This circumstance being much talked of at the time, his late Majesty (George III.) heard of it, and Mr. Nagle being pointed out to him, he entered into conversation, paying many compliments to his gallantry. "It was a hazardous attempt, Captain Nagle," observed the King. "I never thought of the hazard, please your Majesty." "But do you think you would run such a risk again, Captain Nagle?" "Please your Majesty, I would go to hell at any time to serve a friend," replied the plain though courageous seaman.

Edmund Burke was born in the house on Arran Quay, January 1, O. S. 1730. Those who are fond of tracing coincidences will not fail to remark, that, like his great contemporaries Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, he was a younger son. It has likewise been generally believed and circulated with confidence, that he inherited only a younger son's patrimony, or in other words little or nothing, and that in London previous to his entrance into Parliament, he was wholly dependent on his pen for the means of support. Were this report true, it would be creditable to his industry and perseverance. But such was not the case. The integrity and reputation of his father enabled him, after living in affluence, and educating his children in a suitable manner, to leave behind at his death a considerable provision for them. The writer is assured from unquestionable authority, and the same fact was frequently mentioned by the late Dr. Lawrence to his friends, that Mr. Burke received from his family at various times a sum little short of 20,000*l.*, a larger patrimony than fell to the share of Mr. Pitt. This circumstance would not be worth adverting to were it not for the pains taken by political opponents to represent him as little better than a mere adventurer.

Very little is known of his early years, except his being of a delicate constitution, tending, as was believed, to consumption. The most troublesome symptom of the complaint was a pain in the side, which disabled him from taking the same degree of boyish exercise as his brothers, and when they therefore were at play, he was commonly seen reclining on a sofa perusing a book. To this Richard Burke alluded, when being found in a reverie shortly after an extraordinary display of powers in the House of Commons by his brother, and questioned by Mr. Malone as to the cause—"I have been wondering," said he, "how Ned has contrived to monopolize all the talents of the family; but then again, I remember *when we were at play he was always at work.*"

His delicate state of health rendering necessary a longer stay

than is customary under the paternal roof, he was first taught to read by his mother, a woman of cultivated understanding. It is likewise traditionally related as something remarkable and even ludicrous, that another instructor of this great master of the powers of the English language was an elderly female resident in the neighbourhood, who feeling a strong partiality for the boy, found amusement in communicating the rudiments of learning to his infant mind.

The air of the country, however, being deemed essential to give vigour to his frame, he was removed from the metropolis to the house of his grandfather at Castletown Roche. Here for the first time he was put to school; and the ruins of the school-room, or what is said to have been such, may be still traditionally pointed out to those who take an interest in prying into those early haunts which the subsequent development of great genius serves to elevate into celebrity. His progress in knowledge, however, was not very considerable, his relations, from motives of kindness, directing his attention more to what was likely to improve his health than to inform his mind. Still he was not idle. The village school-master, whose name was O'Halloran, and who lived to an advanced age, was known to one or two of the older inhabitants living there a few years ago, who remembered him in their youth as boasting upon all occasions that he was the first who had put a Latin grammar into the hands of Edmund Burke.

Another of this old man's stories, of the truth of which, from the known benevolence of heart of the pupil, as well as from the circumstantiality with which it was told by the master, there was no reason to doubt, related to the time of Mr. Burke going thither to look after his property in 1766. Divested of something of the circumlocution common to those who belong to, or mingle much with the lower classes in Ireland, but retaining some part of the phraseology, it was in substance this:—Hearing that *his boy*, as he called him, who had got into parliament, was come to look at the *ould* place, he thought he would just *step up a bit* to the house to see whether he would remember his poor master. Proceeding slowly up the avenue, doubtful of the reception he should meet with from a great man, he recognized him dressing in a room over the door of the house (long since in ruins), and the *boy* as quickly remembered his *ould* master's face again: *Sorrow a minute* did he wait, but ran down stairs, his shirt collar open, his beard half shaven, seized him eagerly by both hands, and “asked all about me, and about the little boys his school-fellows, and said you must stay all day with me, O'Halloran, and gossip about old times;—and sure enough I did;—but was this all do you suppose? No, to be sure it was not;—didn't he put five golden guineas into my hand as I was coming away?”

The gentleman to whom this anecdote was related, in the course of other inquiries in the neighbourhood, asked a cottager,

in order to try if the name was familiar among this class of people, whether he knew any thing of a noted man called Burke who once lived in that quarter? "To be sure I do;" was the reply, "Hasn't every body heard of Edmund Burke?"

At Castletown Roche he spent a considerable time, so much it is believed as five years; and the partiality which he always entertained for the spot in talking of it in his domestic circle, added to his long residence, and familiarity with the neighbouring objects, particularly Spenser's ruined castle, gave rise to the belief among many intimate friends of his having been born there. In Ireland this report is particularly current on account of the associations connected with the spot which gave birth to Spenser's celebrated poem, and which have justly caused it to be considered classic ground. It was countenanced also by some beautiful lines which he wrote at college on the river Blackwater, running to Youghall Bay, through the counties of Cork and Waterford, near to the spot where he resided, and into which falls the *Molla* or *Mulla*, a stream immortalized by the author of the Fairy Queen. On this river also, the famed Mrs. Wolstoncroft is said to have written some pretty lines when in the family of Lord Kingston; and at a more remote date it is familiarly associated with the names of Essex and Raleigh (who had possessions in the vicinity), and other celebrated characters from the reign of Elizabeth down to our own time.

Spenser thus alludes to Sir Walter Raleigh's visits to him when resident at Kilcolman Castle—

"There a strange shepherd chanc'd to find me out,  
Whether allured by my pipe's delight,  
Whose pleasing sound yskilled far about,  
Or thither led by chance, I know not right;  
Whom when I asked from what place he came,  
And how he hight, himself he did yeleep,  
'The shepherd of the ocean by name,'  
And said he came far from the main sea deep."

Several other places in Ireland have equally, though incorrectly, contended for the honour of his birth, such as Athlone; Limerick; Thurles in the county of Tipperary; the county of Carlow adjoining to Kildare; and the vicinity of Lismore. Something of this uncertainty is due to that unhappy neglect which Ireland too often exhibits towards her eminent men; something to Mr. Burke himself, who, from disregard of contemporary applause, or that unusual humility with which he was well known to regard himself and his exertions, never willingly obtruded his name into the magazines and newspapers of the day, nor would he furnish materials for such purpose to his friends. The consequence is, there is less known of him than of other public men of the time, even those who had not half his desert or half his reputation. Some particulars, in fact, are still unknown even to his most intimate acquaintance, and are likely to continue so.



From Castletown Roche he was removed to Dublin, and is said to have continued about a year at school in Smithfield in that city, kept by a Mr. James Fitzgerald, when the reputation of the classical academy at Ballitore, and the improvement of his health, further impaired by rapid growth, induced his father to send him thither.

This village stands on an agreeable site in the county of Kildare, 28 miles to the southward of Dublin, in a valley through which runs the small river Griese,—a prolific theme for school-boy punning. The site was purchased early in the last century by two of the Society of Friends, John Barcroft and Amos Strettel, as a species of colony for its members, and the chief inhabitants are still of that persuasion. A school of a superior class being wanting among this intelligent community, an honest and learned Quaker, Abraham Shackleton, was invited from Yorkshire, in 1726, to conduct it, whose capacity and diligence soon spread the reputation of the establishment over much of the southern and eastern parts of Ireland, by turning out from it several eminent men. It was continued by his son Richard Shackleton; by his grandson Abraham, who died in 1818; both men of superior original minds, and poetical powers; and still exists with undiminished reputation under the direction of the son-in-law of the latter, Mr. James White. The grand-daughter of the founder, Mrs. Mary Leadbeater, inherits the genius of her family, and is advantageously known to the public by a volume of "Poems," published in 1808; "The Landlord's Friend;" "Cottage Biography;" "Cottage Dialogues;" the latter work introduced to the world under the warm sanction of Miss Edgeworth, and with the others, imparting the most faithful views we possess of the interior of an Irish cottage, and the manners of that peculiar, and in many respects original people.

To this school Edmund, then in his 12th year, along with his brothers Garret and Richard, was removed the 26th May, 1741. It has been observed by Dr. Johnson, that the early years of distinguished men, when minutely traced, furnish evidence of the same vigour or originality of mind by which they are celebrated in after-life. Such was certainly the case with young Burke.

His habits, so far as can be remembered, indicated more of solidity than commonly belongs to that period of life; his powers appeared not so much in brilliancy, as in steadiness of application, facility of comprehension, and strength of memory; indications which drew the commendation first, and, as his powers unfolded themselves, soon the warm regard of his master, under whose paternal care the improvement of his health kept pace with that of his mind; and the grateful pupil never forgot his obligations.

Among his schoolfellows were Dr. Brocklesby, the physician, afterwards so well known in the literary circles of London; the Rev. Michael Kearney, brother to one of the Bishops of Ossory,

a modest and most ingenious man, of great literary acquirements and endowments of mind, who died in 1814 at a very advanced age; Thomas Bushe, father to the present Irish Judge of that name; and several others of equal talents, though filling inferior stations in life, among whom was a Mr. Matthew Smith, a country schoolmaster, who possessed his esteem, and with whom he corresponded. Another, a Mr. Zouch, who was still less fortunate in life, he kept for some years domesticated in his establishment at Beaconsfield, partly as amanuensis, partly as steward, and whom he tried repeatedly to push forward in the world. Dr. Sleight, an eminent physician of Cork, the friend of Goldsmith in more than one season of adversity, and the first friend of Barry, the painter, did not come to the school till Mr. Burke had quitted it, but they met in London afterwards, and became intimately acquainted, the latter frequently saying, "he knew few more ingenious and valuable men."

But his chief favourite and friend was Richard Shackleton, the only son of his master and his successor in the school, with whom a lively epistolary correspondence was kept up during the remainder of his life; whom he never failed to visit when he went to Ireland; who sometimes came to England to spend a short time at Beaconsfield with him; and for whose death in 1792, he expressed, in a very affectionate letter to the family, the most sincere regret; confessing to the shedding of tears on the occasion.

This gentleman, who felt an equal degree of attachment to his illustrious acquaintance, being often questioned during his life as to the boyish peculiarities of the great Burke, seemed to feel much interest in recounting them. To an intimate friend of his, to whom I am obliged for the communication of these and several other particulars, he was accustomed to give the following summary from personal observation, which, being three or four years older, he was enabled to do with sufficient accuracy; and as they are, perhaps, the only authentic notices which remain of the period in question, possess some little interest for those who love to trace back great talents from maturity to the bud.

His genius, observed Mr. Shackleton, appeared to be promising from the first; he was not very far advanced when he came to school, but soon evinced great aptitude to learn; and on many occasions a soundness and manliness of mind, and ripeness of judgment beyond his years. He read much while quite a boy, accumulated a great variety of knowledge, and delighted in exercising, and occasionally exhibiting to his companions, superior powers of memory, particularly in what is called *capping* Latin verses. A very favourite study, as he himself once confessed in the House of Commons, was the old romances, Palmerin of England, and Don Belianis of Greece, upon which he had wasted much valuable time. An inquisitive and speculative cast of mind



were not the least distinguishing of his peculiarities ; he devoted much time to the eager perusal of history and poetry ; the study of the classics seemed to be more his diversion than his business. He was of an affectionate disposition, rather fond of being alone, less lively and bustling than other boys of the same age, but good-natured, communicative of what he knew, and always willing to teach or to learn.

In the family of this gentleman are preserved a series of his letters, at least a considerable number of them, commencing at the age of 15, down to within two months of his death ; and the earliest said to be distinguished by as strong a love of virtue, affection for his friend, and superior capacity for observation, as the last. To these the writer, from some family objection, has not been permitted to have access ; but the same friend to whom Mr. Shackleton communicated the substance of some of them, as well as the specimens of young Burke's poetical powers which appear in the present volume, has favoured him with some of the circumstances to which they refer.

Few anecdotes of him, while at school, are preserved. It is recorded, however, that seeing a poor man pulling down his own hut near the village, and hearing that it was done by order of a great gentleman in a gold-laced hat (the parish conservator of the roads), upon the plea of being too near the high-way, the young philanthropist, his bosom swelling with indignation, exclaimed, that were he a man, and possessed of authority, the poor should not thus be oppressed. Little things in children often tend to indicate, as well as to form, the mind of the future man ; there was no characteristic of his subsequent life more marked, than a hatred of oppression in any form, or from any quarter.

The steward of the establishment at Ballitore, who sometimes condescended to be director of the school-boy sports, used to repeat this and similar anecdotes with no little pride of his old acquaintancè when he had risen into celebrity. He delighted in hearing of him ; he would sit for hours attentive to this his favourite theme ; and particularly when the newspapers had any thing of more than usual interest respecting him to communicate, he was quite insensible to all other claims upon his attention. He was a hard-headed, North-of-Ireland presbyterian, named Gill, upon whom young Shackleton wrote verses, and young Burke chopped his boyish logic ; the shrewd, though unlettered remarks in reply to which, gave him in their opinion some claim to the more philosophical appellation of Hobbes. By this name Mr. Burke used to inquire after him while at college ; and never afterwards went to Ballitore, where he chiefly continued to reside, without giving him proofs of regard.

The last visit he made took place in 1786, after the opening of the impeachment of Mr. Hastings. The old steward, who regarded this measure as another illustration of the humane spirit

displayed by the boy, was then verging on his eightieth year, his eyes dim, his limbs feeble, and, as it proved shortly afterwards, tottering into the grave; but the announcement of the name of his youthful associate inspired the worn-out frame of the aged man with momentary vigour. Mr. Burke accosted him with his accustomed kindness, shook him often and cordially by the hand, and introduced his son, who showed equal attention to his father's humble but venerable friend. This condescension so much affected the old man's feelings, that for some time he was deprived of utterance; he bowed repeatedly, and at length brought out, that he was proud—very proud to see him—adding, “you have many friends in Ireland, sir.” “I am happy, Mr. Gill, that you are one of them.—You look very well.—Am I much changed since you last saw me?” Old William replied, after some attempt at examination, that he was almost too *dark* with age to observe; when Mr. Burke, with characteristic affability, took a candle and held it up to his own face, to give the aged servant a better view of it; a scene which the relator of the anecdote says, those who were present cannot easily forget.\*

A spirit of emulation with his friend Shackleton, and natural taste together, made young Burke towards the close of his school career, if not a poet at least poetical; though few, if any, of his verses of this date are known to exist. It was about this period, however, immediately before or after quitting school, that in a spirit of friendly rivalry they each translated the thirteenth Idyllium of Theocritus on the death of Adonis, reported to have possessed considerable merit. Some scenes of a play on the story of King Alfred, are also attributed to him about the same time, which were either lost or destroyed while on a visit to a relation residing in Ballyduff, near Thurles, in the county of Tipperary.

At Ballitore also he is believed to have imbibed other and more distinguished characteristics; particularly that regard for civil and religious liberty which marked his future life; and this from observing among the society of *friends*, in which he was domesticated, that differences of opinion on these points made neither worse subjects, nor worse men. Reflection, and the remembrance that relations on the side of both parents happened to be Roman Catholics, probably taught him to extend the same liberality of sentiment toward persons of that persuasion, then in a very oppressed and persecuted state. His opinions on this point are known to have been formed soon; and the fact exhibits an additional proof of early maturity of mind, in possessing the power to disengage itself from those prejudices and animosities existing in Ireland between protestant and catholic, at a time when, even among the nearest relations, they produced an unchristian, and, in fact, a hostile spirit.

\* Poems by Mary Leadbeater (late Shackleton), 1808.—Cottage Biography, 1822, by the same.

To something of this he alluded in a debate after the riots in London (June 20, 1780), on a proposal that no papist should be permitted to educate a protestant; and on this occasion spoke in very high terms of his preceptor, while he gives us some insight into the nature of his studies soon afterward.

“He had been educated (he said) as a protestant of the church of England by a dissenter who was an honour to his sect, though that sect was considered one of the purest. Under his eye he had read the Bible, morning, noon, and night, and had ever since been the happier and better man for such reading. He had afterwards turned his attention to the reading of all the theological publications on all sides, that were written with such wonderful ability in the last and present century; but finding at length that such studies tended to confound and bewilder rather than to enlighten, he had dropped them, embracing and holding fast a firm faith in the church of England.”

Toward the middle of April, 1744, having been just three years at school, he quitted it, possessed of what Mr. Shackleton used to describe as “a large and miscellaneous stock of learning for his years,” and next day, as he informed that gentleman by letter, entered Trinity college, Dublin, as a pensioner, the expense of which is about 150*l.* per annum, that of a fellow commoner, the highest class of students, being about 200*l.* The following is the entry in the register; premising that there is a mistake of a year in his age, possibly done by design, 16 being the usual time of admission; and that the academical year beginning in July, the year is really 1744, though nominally a year sooner; his name also is spelt according to the orthography of the other branches of the family.

1743,\*

April 14,	Edmund, Bourke Pens.	Fil. Ric. Gene- ros.	Annum Agens 16.	Natus Dublin.	Educatus Sub. ferula Mag. Shackleton	Dr. Pelis- sier.
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Dr. Pelissier, who had the honour of having such a pupil, is represented by high college authority as a man of very ordinary acquirements, who when vice-provost in 1753, quitted the university for the living of Ardstraw, in the north of Ireland. To him Mr. Burke owed few obligations, except, as it is said, having recommended to him the acquisition of multiform knowledge, rather than to devote his attention to any particular branch,—a plan which looking to the results as exemplified in the instances of Johnson and Burke, would seem not to be the worst for enlarging and strengthening the human faculties.

The university course, besides abstract christianity; the usual portion of mathematics, theoretical and practical; natural, moral, and political philosophy; dealt deeply in several old and rather uninteresting volumes of scholastic logic, fortified however by Locke

\* For the entry I am indebted to John Colhoun, Esq. of the Irish bar



on the Understanding; Burlamaqui and Locke were then the chief writers on government, the latter of which however has since been expunged from the list of college books. In classics the course comprehended all the chief Greek and Latin authors. Composition in those languages however is more neglected than in the English universities, the attention of the student in Dublin, as in Scotland, being directed more to a perfect acquaintance with their sentiments and beauties than to the niceties of grammar and idiom; an omission which the former learned bodies deem of more importance than perhaps it really is.

A general belief has prevailed, that, like Johnson, Swift, Goldsmith, and other eminent men, Mr. Burke attracted no particular notice, and exhibited at college no proofs of that superiority for which he was afterwards so celebrated. This may be partly true. Goldsmith, who was his contemporary, at least said so, more than once, in order perhaps to apologize for his own negligence; but Dr. Leland, who was then a fellow of the college, and necessarily a more competent judge, used to say that he was known as a young man of superior, but unpretending talents, and more anxious to acquire knowledge than to display it. Other evidence also exists that he did not pass among the crowd wholly undistinguished. On the 26th May, 1746, he was elected a scholar of the house; the qualification for which, being a successful examination in the classics before the provost and senior fellows, often confers a superior degree of reputation through life in that branch of learning on him who succeeds; and as candidates are not eligible till the third year of residence in the university, it will be observed, by referring to dates, that he obtained this distinction the moment the regulations permitted: the advantages of it, which continue for five years, are chambers and commons free, a small annuity, and a vote for the member of parliament for the university. In addition to this, the writer has seen one of his prize books presented to him by the college for proficiency in the classics in 1745, a year before he was elected scholar.

It has been repeatedly said, like many other erroneous statements concerning this eminent man, that he quitted the university without a degree. The contrary is the fact. He commenced A. B. 23rd February 1747—1748, and proceeded A. M. 1751. No academical irregularities have been laid to his charge, except if this can be called so, a participation with his fellow collegians in supporting Mr. Sheridan, father to the celebrated Brinsley Sheridan, then manager of the Dublin theatre, in the famous riot in 1746, against a party who nearly destroyed the house, and drove him from the Irish stage; to the punishment of the delinquents Mr. Burke alludes in a letter to his friend Shackleton of this year.

His favourite studies, if college report may be trusted, were classics, history, philosophy, general literature, and from the speculative turn before alluded to, a pretty strong attachment to



metaphysics ; at least so far as they go toward clearing the judgment and strengthening the understanding, but no further ; this pursuit, however, he afterwards relinquished, convinced, as he said, that it was of doubtful utility, tending neither to make men better nor happier, but rather the reverse. His opinions, both of many of our own and of the ancient writers, were formed at an early period ; admiring more especially those which imparted the greatest knowledge of human nature, of the springs of human motives and human actions, and an acquaintance with human manners ; and on this principle used not only to observe, "that a good novel was a good book," but frequently to amuse the social fire-side, particularly the ladies, by perusing a few of the most celebrated ; adopting fully the sentiment of Pope, that man is the proper study of man.

Bacon's essays he read diligently, and always characterized them as the greatest works of that great man. Shakspeare, Addison, Le Sage, Fielding, and Smollett, then a new writer, were his constant companions in every interval from graver studies ; Richardson, contrary to the opinion of Johnson, he thought much inferior to Fielding as a describer of human nature. Demosthenes was his favourite orator ; Plutarch's writings he professed, in a letter to a friend at this time, to admire beyond those of any other ; he preferred Euripides to Sophocles among the dramatists, and the Greek historians generally to the Latin. Of Horace, Lucretius, and Virgil, he was particularly fond ; maintaining the superiority of the *Æneid* as a poem over the *Iliad*, while he admitted the general excellence of Homer's genius in invention, force, and sublimity, over that of Virgil.

In this estimate of the two poems, in which few critics agree with him, something may be owing to a keen relish for the superior taste and elegance of the Roman poet ; something to the greater prevalence of the Latin language in Ireland (as in Scotland) than the Greek ; something to the general enthusiasm felt there almost universally for Virgil in particular ; and something perhaps to the critic's early attempts to give detached portions of this favourite writer an English poetical dress.

Though accused, by that party animosity which ever clings to a great English statesman as if it were a condition of his existence, of innumerable other offences, Mr. Burke has scarcely ever been suspected of the sin of poetry. For while some have expressed surprise that a man of such brilliant and seemingly kindred genius, should not have made the attempt, others did not hesitate to assert that he was unequal to it ; and several of his acquaintance, and even biographers, believed and have stated that he never wrote a line in his life. Even Cumberland, who had known him since 1760, in his own memoirs, written so recently as 1805, assigns Mr. Burke's unacquaintance with the practice of writing poetry, as the reason why, in the general

endeavour by the club at St. James's coffee-house, in 1774, to make jocular epitaphs upon Goldsmith, he did not take up his pen.

The following therefore may be esteemed a curiosity: it is a translation by Mr. Burke, while at College in 1746, of the conclusion of the second Georgic of Virgil, the panegyric on a country life; and as the production of a youth just turned of sixteen, is not merely no ordinary effort, but in many passages may contest the palm with Dryden; in fact, a comparison of the whole will tell little, if any thing, to his disadvantage.

Oh! happy swains! did they know how to prize

The many blessings rural life supplies;  
 Where in safe huts from clattering arms afar,  
 The pomp of cities and the din of war,  
 Indulgent earth, to pay his labouring hand,  
 Pours in his arms the blessings of the land;  
 Calm through the valleys flows along his life,  
 He knows no danger, as he knows no strife.  
 What! though no marble portals, rooms of state,  
 Vomit the cringing torrent from his gate,  
 Though no proud purple hang his stately halls,  
 Nor lives the breathing brass along his walls,  
 Though the sheep clothe him without colours' aid,  
 Nor seeks he foreign luxury from trade,  
 Yet peace and honesty adorn his days  
 With rural riches and a life of ease.

Joyous the yell-wing fields here Ceres sees,  
 Here blushing clusters bend the groaning trees,  
 Here spreads the silver lake, and all around  
 Perpetual green, and flow'rs adorn the ground.

How happy too, the peaceful rustic lies,  
 The grass his bed, his canopy the skies;  
 From heat retiring to the noon-tide glade,  
 His trees protect him with an ample shade;  
 No jarring sounds invade his settling breast,  
 His lowing cows shall lull him into rest.  
 Here 'mong the caves, the woods, and rocks around,  
 Here, only here, the hardy youth abound;  
 Religion here has fixed her pure abodes,  
 Parents are honoured, and adored the gods;  
 Departing justice, when she fled mankind,  
 In these blest plains her footsteps left behind.

Celestial Nine! my only joy and care,  
 Whose love inflames me, and whose rites I bear,  
 Lead me, oh lead me! from the vulgar throng,  
 Clothe nature's myst'ries in thy rapturous song;  
 What various forms in heav'ns broad belt appear,  
 Whose limits bound the circle of the year,  
 Or spread around in glitt'ring order lie,  
 Or roll in mystic numbers through the sky?  
 What dims the midnight lustre of the moon?  
 What cause obstructs the sun's bright rays at noon?  
 Why haste his fiery steeds so long to lave  
 Their splendid chariot in the wintry wave?  
 Or why bring on the lazy moon so slow?  
 What love detains them in the realms below?

But if this dull, this feeble breast of mine,  
 Can't reach such heights, or hold such truths divine,

Oh! may I seek the rural shades alone,  
Of half mankind unknowing and unknown,  
Range by the borders of the silver flood,  
And waste a life ingloriously good.

Hail! blooming fields, where joy unclouded reigns,  
Where silver Sperchius laves the yell'wing plains.  
Oh! where, Taygeta, shall I hear around  
Lyæus praise the Spartan virgins sound?  
What god will bear me from this burning heat,  
In Hæmus' valley, to some cool retreat,  
Where oaks and laurels guard the sacred ground,  
And with their ample foliage shade me round?

Happy the man, who versed in Nature's laws,  
From known effects can trace the hidden cause!  
Him not the terrors of the vulgar fright  
The vagrant forms and terrors of the night;  
Black and relentless fate he tramples on,  
And all the rout of greedy Acheron.  
Happy whose life the rural god approves,  
The guardian of his growing flocks and groves;  
Harmonious Pan and old Sylvanus join  
The sister nymphs, to make his joys divine;  
Him not the splendours of a crown can please,  
Or consul's honours bribe to quit his ease.  
Though on his will should crowding armies wait,  
And suppliant kings come suing to his gate;  
No piteous objects here his peace molest,  
Nor can he sorrow while another's blest;  
His food alone what bounteous nature yields,  
From bending orchards and luxuriant fields,  
Pleased he accepts, nor seeks the mad resort  
Of thronging clients and litigious court.

Let one delight all danger's forms to brave,  
Rush on the sword, or plunge amid the wave,  
Destroy all nations with an easy mind,  
And make a general havoc of his kind,  
That on a Tyrian couch he may recline,  
And from a costlier goblet quaff his wine;  
Another soul is buried with his store,  
Hourly he heaps, and hourly longs for more;  
Some in the rostrum fix their sole delight,  
Some in the applauses of a rich third night;  
While gain smiles lovely in another's eyes,  
Though brother's blood should buy the horrid prize;  
Though from his country guilt should make him run,  
Where other nations feel another sun.

The happy rustic turns the fruitful soil,  
And hence proceeds the year's revolving toil;  
On this his country for support depends,  
On this his cattle, family, and friends:  
For this the bounteous gods reward his care,  
With all the product of the various year;  
His youngling flocks now whiten all the plain,  
Now sink the furrows with the teeming grain;  
Beauteous to these Pomona adds her charms,  
And pours her fragrant treasures in his arms,  
From loaden boughs, the orchard's rich produce,  
The mellow apple, and the generous juice.

Now winter's frozen hand benumbs the plain,  
The winter too has blessings for the swain:  
His grunting herd is fed without his toil,  
His groaning presses overflow with oil;  
The languid autumn crown'd with yellow leaves,  
With bleeding fruit and golden-bearded sheaves,



Her various products scatters o'er the land,  
 And rears the horn of Plenty in her hand.  
 Nor less than these, wait his domestic life,  
 His darling children, and his virtuous wife,  
 The day's long absence they together mourn,  
 Hang on his neck, and welcome his return ;  
 The cows, departing from the joyful field,  
 Before his door their milky tribute yield,  
 While on the green, the frisky kids engage,  
 With adverse horns and counterfeited rage.  
 He too, when mark'd with white the festal day,  
 Devotes his hours to rural sport and play ;  
 Stretch'd on the green amid the jovial quire  
 Of boon companions that surround the fire,  
 With front enlarged he crowns the flowing bowl,  
 And calls thee, Bacchus, to inspire his soul ;  
 Now warm'd with wine, to vigorous sports they rise ;  
 High on an elm is hung the victor's prize ;  
 To him 'tis given, whose force with greatest speed  
 Can wing the dart, or urge the fiery steed.

Such manners made the ancient Sabines bold,  
 Such the life led by Romulus of old ;  
 By arts like these divine Etruria grows,  
 From such foundations mighty Rome arose,  
 Whose godlike fame the world's vast circuit fills,  
 Who with one wall hath circled seven vast hills ;  
 Such was, ere Jove began his iron reign,  
 Ere mankind feasted upon oxen slain,  
 The life that Saturn and his subjects led,  
 Ere from the land offended justice fled ;  
 As yet the brazen use of arms unknown,  
 And anvils rung with scythes and shares alone.

In addition to this and the version of the *Idyllium* of Theocritus already mentioned, Mr. Burke made not only other translations, but wrote original pieces, some of them of length. A few of the shorter ones were submitted to the inspection of Mr. Shackleton, or directly addressed to him on temporary circumstances ; several of them reported to be juvenile enough ; others to display talent, and an ardent love of virtue ; but the major part believed to be now irrecoverably lost. Conjointly, they wrote a poem, taking Ballitore for the subject. The address before noticed to the river Blackwater, which was considered to possess superior merit, was, with several letters written by Mr. Burke during the early part of his career in London, borrowed by his father from Mr. Shackleton, and never returned.

One other memorial of him, however, is preserved in the following lines, owing probably to the kind care of the gentleman to whom they were addressed ; and they will be read with interest as the production of a pen so universally celebrated for its powers in prose :

*To Richard Shackleton, on his Marriage.*

[Written by Mr. Burke, 1748.]

When hearts are barter'd for less precious gold,  
 And like the heart, the venal song is sold :  
 Each flame is dull, and but one base desire  
 Kindles the bridal torch and poet's fire ;



The gods their violated rites forbear,  
 The Muse flies far, and Hymen is not there.  
 But when true love binds in his roseate bands  
 That rare but happy union, hearts and hands—  
 When nought but friendship guides the poet's song,  
 How sweet the verse! the happy love how strong!  
 Oh! if the Muse, indulging my design,  
 Should favour me, as love has favour'd thine,  
 I'd challenge Pan at peril of my life,  
 Though his Arcadia were to judge the strife.

Why don't the vocal groves ring forth their joy,  
 And lab'ring echoes all their mouths employ?  
 To tell his bride what sighs, what plaints they heard,  
 While yet his growing flame's success he fear'd,  
 And all his pains o'erpaid with transport now,  
 When love exults and he enjoys his vow?  
 Silent ye stand—nor will bestow one lay  
 Of all he taught to grace this happy day;  
 Can joy ne'er harbour in your sullen shade,  
 Or are ye but for lovers' sorrows made?

I'll leave you then, and from the Bride's bright eye,  
 A happier omen take which cannot lie,  
 Of growing time, still growing in delight,  
 Of rounds of future years all mark'd with white,  
 Through whose bright circles, free from envious chance,  
 Concord and love shall lead an endless dance.

What is the monarch's crown, the shepherd's ease,  
 The hero's laurel, and the poet's bays?  
 A load of toilsome life too dull to bear,  
 If heav'n's indulgence did not add the fair,  
 E'en Eden's sweets our Adam did despise,  
 All its gay scenes could not delight his eyes,  
 Woman God gave, and then 'twas Paradise.

Another Eve and Paradise are thine,  
 May'st thou be father of as long a line!  
 Your heart so fix'd on her, and hers on you,  
 As if the world afforded but the two,  
 That to this age your constancy may prove,  
 There yet remains on earth a power call'd love.

These to my friend, in lays not vainly loud,  
 The palm, unknowing to the giddy crowd  
 I sung, for these demand his steady truth,  
 And friendship growing from our earliest youth;  
 A nobler lay unto his sire should grow,  
 To whose kind care my better birth I owe,  
 Who to fair science did my youth entice,  
 Won from the paths of ignorance and vice.

Things of this description are not constructed to withstand the wintry winds of rigid criticism, yet it is one of the best of the kind; the thoughts chiefly original, the versification harmonious, the expression only in a few places faulty, and the allusions, as has been remarked of his speeches, and even colloquial pleasantries, classical.

He was not only a writer of poetry, but a diligent student of the best English poets, particularly Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, and Young; showing the most decided attachment to those passages in them distinguished for grandeur, sublimity, and vigour of imagination. The descriptive truth and solemn seriousness of

Young impressed him so forcibly that at one time, it is said, he could repeat much of the Night Thoughts by rote; and in a copy of the work which often formed a travelling companion in his youthful days, the following lines, stated to be in his handwriting, have been mentioned as written on one of the fly-leaves:—

Jove claim'd the verse old Homer sung,  
But God himself inspired Young.

Milton, however, was a still greater favourite, chiefly in consequence of his daring flights and sublime conceptions on the most awful of all subjects, so much above the track, and perhaps the powers, of any other poet. He always recommended the study of him to his son, and to all his younger friends, as exhibiting the highest possible range of mind in the English language; and to the last, quoted him frequently both in conversation and in writing. It is therefore with some truth that the Rev. Mr. Todd, in his life of Milton (p. clv.), makes the following suggestion; while the anecdote by which it is accompanied exhibits Mr. Burke's early attachment to those social literary meetings, of which in after life he, as well as Dr. Johnson, were so fond.

“Burke, I may observe,” says Mr. Todd, “was an ardent admirer of Milton. I learn from Mr. Walker (of Dublin) that this great orator was a distinguished member of a literary club instituted in Dublin in 1747, in which he sometimes held the Secretary's pen, and sometimes filled the President's chair; and that in the original minutes of this society, his early Miltonic taste is thus recorded—

(Friday, June 5, 1747, Mr. Burke being ordered to speak the speech of Moloch, *receives applause for the delivery, it being in character.* Then the speech was read and criticised upon; its many beauties illustrated; the chief judged to be its conformity with the character of Moloch—

No let us rather choose,  
Arm'd with hell-flames and fury, all at once,  
O'er Heav'n's high towers to force resistless way.

The words ‘all at once’ (the metre not considered) seemed to the whole assembly to hurt the sentence by stopping the rapidity and checking the fierceness of it, making it too long and tedious. Then was Belial's speech read to the great delight of the hearers; whose opinion was, that Homer only can be compared to Milton, not only for the beauties that shine in every verse, but likewise for the just and lively colours in which each character was drawn; for that none but Homer, like him, ever supported such spirit and exactness in the speeches of such a contrast and variety of persons.)—These notices, adds the learned writer, will not seem tedious; for they suggest an opinion that the finest oratory of

modern times might owe its origin and perfection to the poetry of Milton."

That acquaintance with history which distinguished his future life, and which there is no doubt tended to the development of much of his political wisdom, was probably fostered by attendance on this society, and on occasional meetings of the incipient Historical Society; an association of the students of Trinity College much celebrated in Ireland, and where some of her greatest men first gave promise of their future fame. It was formally established and countenanced by authority, says the eminent Dr. Elrington, in a communication with which the writer has been favoured, in 1770, suppressed and again resumed in 1794, and finally put down by the heads of the college in 1815; being supposed to direct the attention of youth more than was desirable toward political subjects.

That these meetings had a powerful influence upon young Burke, his friends generally believe. His first efforts as a politician, adds the highest college authority, were made in 1749, previous to his quitting the university, in some letters against Mr. Henry Brooke, the celebrated author of the tragedy of "Gustavus Vasa," the "Fool of Quality," and other popular works, who then stood high in estimation with the patriots, in consequence of the representation of his tragedy having been interdicted by government for the alleged boldness of its sentiments. This gentleman, who had been also educated at Trinity College and entered of the Middle Temple, he ridiculed for his patriotic pretensions under the name, as it is said, of *Diabetes*—in allusion perhaps to the fluency with which his writings were said to be composed.

Another subject for the exertion of his sarcastic wit about the same period, was Dr. Charles Lucas, a celebrated character of the Irish metropolis, who from apothecary and then physician became a patriot; thence, by the folly of those in power sanctioned by a vote of the Irish parliament, elevated into a popular idol and a martyr in consequence of being outlawed by that vote; who afterwards on his return became member for the city of Dublin, whose statue now stands on the staircase of the Royal Exchange there; and whose remains received the unusual honour of being attended to the grave by the whole corporation; while his widow, in consideration of the services and sufferings of her husband, received from the same body a pension for her life. At the period in question, the persecution of the Castle, as the seat of government is there termed, had sharpened his zeal into some degree of intemperance in his conduct and writings, when Mr. Burke assailed him sarcastically as *Epaminondas*; and by pushing his political doctrines to their ultimate results, as he afterwards did a different set of opinions by Lord Bolingbroke, aimed at throwing over them an air of absurdity. What were



the effects of Mr. Burke's pen in these early political exercises, cannot now with certainty be known; but judging from his private letters written about this time, their vigour was not much inferior to that of any future period of his life.

His destination, from an early period, was for the bar; then the usual resort, either as a profession or as forming a more easy introduction to the House of Commons, of the young men of Ireland distinguished for talents and ambition. Some of his relations say that he was intended from the first for the English bar, and there is some ground for the belief in the early period at which his name was enrolled at the Middle Temple. The following is the entry.

23 Aprilis, 1747.

M<sup>r</sup>. Edmundus Burke, filius secundus Ricardi Burke de civitate Dublin. Unius Attornatorum curiæ Scaccariæ Domini Regis in Regno Hiberniæ, admissus est in societatem Medii Templi, London.

*Et dat pro fine* £4. 0s. 0d.

Early in 1750, not in 1753 as commonly stated, he arrived in London to keep the customary terms previous to being called to the bar. His name appears again in the books of the society as entering into bond, May 2, 1750; his sureties being John Burke, Serjeant's-inn, Fleet-street, Gent. and Thomas Kelly, of the Middle Temple, Gent.

His arrival, however, preceded this period by several months. The first letter to his friend Shackleton bears date the 20th of February, and mentions the introduction of the bill by the Earl of Chesterfield for that alteration in the calendar, which soon afterwards took place.

It may be remarked here, that a long copy of verses on Mrs. Cibber, the celebrated actress, contained in the Annual Register for 1768, are supposed to have been written by Mr. Burke previous to his quitting Dublin: it is possible they may be by his brother Richard; and the least doubt upon the point is sufficient for not giving them insertion here.

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## CHAPTER II.

First Impressions of London and England generally.—Contemplates an Attempt for the Logic Professorship of Glasgow.—Report about St. Omer.—Letter to his Father.—Idea of a perfect Wife.—Dr. Brocklesby's Compliment to Mrs. Burke.—First avowed Publications of Mr. Burke.

His first impressions on viewing the English metropolis are vividly expressed in a letter to his school-fellow already mentioned, Mr. Matthew Smith; and the allusions to Westminster Abbey and the House of Commons, "the chosen temples of fame," as he said on another occasion, will be esteemed by those who look



to auguries sufficiently remarkable; the whole is in a peculiar degree expressive of *character*, the reflections ingenious, and just, and even profound, like most of his letters written afterwards, which, though really despatched off-hand, were by many believed to be studied compositions.

“You’ll expect some short account of my journey to this great city. To tell you the truth, I made very few remarks as I rolled along, for my mind was occupied with many thoughts, and my eyes often filled with tears, when I reflected on all the dear friends I left behind; yet the prospects could not fail to attract the attention of the most indifferent: country seats sprinkled round on every side, some in the modern taste, some in the style of old De Coverley Hall, all smiling on the neat but humble cottage; every village as neat and compact as a bee-hive, resounding with the buzy hum of industry; and inns like palaces.

“What a contrast to our poor country, where you’ll scarce find a cottage ornamented with a chimney! But what pleased me most of all was the progress of agriculture, my favourite study, and my favourite pursuit, if Providence had blessed me with a few paternal acres.\*

“A description of London and its natives would fill a volume. The buildings are very fine: it may be called the sink of vice: but its hospitals and charitable institutions, whose turrets pierce the skies like so many electrical conductors, avert the wrath of Heaven. The inhabitants may be divided into two classes, the *undoers* and the *undone*; generally so, I say, for I am persuaded there are many men of honesty, and women of virtue in every street. An Englishman is cold and distant at first; he is very cautious even in forming an acquaintance; he must know you well before he enters into friendship with you; but if he does, he is not the first to dissolve that sacred bond: in short, a real Englishman is one that performs more than he promises; in company he is rather silent, extremely prudent in his expressions, even in politics, his favourite topic. The women are not quite so reserved; they consult their glasses to the best advantage; and as nature is very liberal in her gifts to their persons, and even mind, it is not easy for a young man to escape their glances, or to shut his ears to their softly flowing accents.

“As to the state of learning in this city, you know I have not been long enough in it to form a proper judgment of that subject. I don’t think, however, there is as much respect paid to a man of letters on this side of the water as you imagine. I don’t find that genius, the ‘rath primrose, which forsaken dies,’ is patronized by any of the nobility, so that writers of the first talents are left to the capricious patronage of the public. Notwithstanding discouragement, literature is cultivated in a high degree. Poetry

\* At this period his elder brother, being alive, was of course in succession to the paternal property.

raises her enchanting voice to heaven. History arrests the wings of Time in his flight to the gulf of oblivion. Philosophy, the queen of arts, and the daughter of heaven, is daily extending her intellectual empire. Fancy sports on airy wing like a meteor on the bosom of a summer cloud; and even Metaphysics spins her cobwebs, and catches some flies.

“The house of Commons not unfrequently exhibits explosions of eloquence that rise superior to those of Greece and Rome, even in their proudest days. Yet, after all, a man will make more by the figures of arithmetic than the figures of rhetoric, unless he can get into the trade wind, and then he may sail secure over Pactolean sands. As to the stage, it is sunk, in my opinion, into the lowest degree; I mean with regard to the trash that is exhibited on it; but I don't attribute this to the taste of the audience, for when Shakspeare warbles his ‘native wood-notes,’ the boxes, pit, and gallery, are crowded—and the gods are true to every word, if properly winged to the heart.

“Soon after my arrival in town I visited Westminster Abbey: the moment I entered I felt a kind of awe pervade my mind which I cannot describe; the very silence seemed sacred. Henry the Seventh's chapel is a very fine piece of Gothic architecture, particularly the roof; but I am told that it is exceeded by a chapel in the University of Cambridge. Mrs. Nightingale's monument has not been praised beyond its merit. The attitude and expression of the husband in endeavouring to shield his wife from the dart of death, is natural and affecting. But I always thought that the image of death would be much better represented with an extinguished torch inverted, than with a dart. Some would imagine that all these monuments were so many monuments of folly;—I don't think so; what useful lessons of morality and sound philosophy do they not exhibit! When the high-born beauty surveys her face in the polished parian, though dumb the marble, yet it tells her that it was placed to guard the remains of as fine a form, and as fair a face as her own. They show besides how anxious we are to extend our loves and friendships beyond the grave, and to snatch as much as we can from oblivion—such is our natural love of immortality; but it is here that letters obtain the noblest triumphs; it is here that the swarthy daughters of Cadmus may hang their trophies on high; for when all the pride of the chisel and the pomp of heraldry yield to the silent touches of time, a single line, a half-worn-out inscription, remain faithful to their trust. Blest be the man that first introduced these strangers into our islands, and may they never want protection or merit! I have not the least doubt that the finest poem in the English language, I mean Milton's *Il Penseroso*, was composed in the long-resounding aisle of a mouldering cloister or ivy'd abbey. Yet after all do you know that I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country church-yard, than in the



tomb of the Capulets. I should like, however, that my dust should mingle with kindred dust. The good old expression 'family burying-ground' has something pleasing in it, at least to me."

During the first few years of his stay in London, the vacations were devoted to an examination of the interior of the country, and sometimes crossing to Ireland, where in 1751, as already mentioned, he took his master's degree, and is believed to have made some stay in Cork. Health, as much as curiosity, formed the inducement to these excursions; the former continued delicate and ill adapted to severe study, though this does not seem to have relaxed his diligence in any degree towards general literature; and that the remedial means he adopted did not wholly fail of effect, we have his own testimony.

Writing to Mr. Shackleton, April 5, 1751, he says, "my health is tolerable, my studies too in the same degree." In another letter of the same year, dated 31st August, from Monmouth, which had then some reputation as a resort for invalids, and whither he had proceeded from Bristol, he alludes playfully to his more juvenile writings, and hopes his present exercises (alluding to the law) may be attended with better success than his literary studies, on the ground that "though a middling poet cannot be endured, there is some quarter for a middling lawyer."

To the same correspondent, September 28, 1752, dated from the house of a Mr. Druce, at Torlin, near Bradford in Wiltshire, a few miles from Bath, where, in company with a friend, he made some stay, enjoying the amusements of the country, he describes how the preceding part of the year had been employed. "Since I had your letter I have often shifted the scene. I spent part of the winter, that is, term-time, in London, and part in Croydon, in Surry; about the beginning of summer finding myself attacked with my old complaint (an affection of the chest), I went once more to Bristol, and found the same benefit; I thank God for it."

Whether he found the law, as a profession, alien to his habits, his health incompetent to its persevering pursuit, or became weaned from it by that attachment to general literature, which has in so many other instances of men of genius proved irresistible, it is certain that his views soon changed; for at the expiration of the usual time he was not called to the bar. Among his brother templers were a few old college associates, who seemed to have come to the same determination; for they were afterwards more known in politics and letters than in law.

In London also he met with many other old friends and college acquaintance, some of whose letters, alluding to him as a very "promising young man," "a remarkably clever young man," "one who possessed very superior genius and information," were extant very recently in more than one family in Ireland. With Dr. Brocklesby, then pushing his way as physician, and who

soon afterwards received an appointment in the medical department of the army, he renewed his acquaintance; and with Dr. Joseph Fenn Sleigh, already mentioned, who was finishing his studies, commenced it: both were Quakers, and both afterwards quitted that persuasion. It was about this period that the late Arthur Murphy, then carrying on the *Gray's Inn Journal*, hearing the acquirements of his young countryman, Mr. Burke, loudly praised by some mutual friends, gained an introduction to him at the chambers of Mr. Kelly, whose name appears as one of his sureties in the Temple books, and on the first interview assented to the general opinion of his being a superior young man: an impression which every succeeding meeting served to increase. The diversity of his knowledge, and the force and originality of his observations, were striking; in history, politics, polite letters, and philosophy, there seemed little with which he was not familiar; and his attachment to the latter, "queen of arts, and daughter of heaven," as he had called her in the letter to Mr. Smith, was so strong, that it is not surprising he should wish to unite his interest with his taste, in the idea entertained about this time of getting elected to the professorship of logic, then vacant in the university of Glasgow.

A principal inducement to this step was probably the recollection that Ireland had more than once supplied the Scottish seats of learning with eminent men. Her last and greatest present to the university in question was, in the language of the first philosopher of Scotland,\* "the profound and eloquent" Dr. Francis Hutcheson.

Born in the north of Ireland, educated at Glasgow, and settling afterwards in Dublin, he soon became distinguished by his writings as one of the first philosophers of the age; and though a dissenter at a time when dissenters were looked upon with an evil eye, enjoyed the friendship and protection of Primate Boulter, Archbishop King, Bishop Synge, Lords Molesworth, Granville, and others, the most eminent in that country for virtue and talents. His fame at length drew an invitation to the university of Glasgow in 1729, first to the Logic, and then to the Moral Philosophy Chair; an event of great moment both in the intellectual and literary history of Scotland. His celebrity attracted a very large class from all parts of the country. He was the immediate precursor of Adam Smith, Reid, Beattie, Ferguson, and others; the instructor of some of them, and, from his celebrity, a source of interest and emulation to all; while the ingenuity and eloquence of his lectures, says the distinguished philosopher already quoted, "contributed very powerfully to diffuse in Scotland that taste for analytical discussion and that spirit of liberal inquiry, to which the world is indebted for some of the most valuable productions

\* Mr. Dugald Stewart.



of the eighteenth century ;” and again, “Dr. Hutcheson, of Glasgow, by his excellent writings, and still more by his eloquent lectures, had diffused among a numerous race of pupils a liberality of sentiment and a refinement of taste, unknown before in this part of the island.”

Upon this eminent man, whose “Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue,” is believed to have suggested the title, at least, of the “Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,” our young adventurer had his eye, in aiming at running, perhaps a similar career of philosophical fame.

Scotsmen, he understood, were no less fond of abstractions and subtleties in the schools, than they are of the more substantial and tangible realities of active life ; and to suit their taste in the former respect, he laid in, in addition to an unusually ample stock of general knowledge, a large adventure in metaphysics,—no less than a refutation of the systems of his own countryman the celebrated Berkeley, and of Hume. There is also no reason whatever to doubt, and his own words are decisive of the fact, that he had even at this time sketched the outline of the essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, as an additional claim to the vacant chair. This honour, however, he failed to obtain ; under what particular circumstances is not now known. It is certain that he never proceeded to an active canvass or public competition ; but being in that quarter of the island, and probably hearing that the office was to be awarded to the successful competitor in a public trial of skill, he took the resolution of contesting the palm with the Scottish literati, until informed that certain private arrangements in the university and city, rendered any such attempt totally hopeless. The inquiry made of Principal Taylor, by a friend of the writer, is satisfactory as to Mr. Burke having been a candidate, but not as to the exact date. His successful competitor was Mr. James Clow.\*

He returned with undiminished spirit to his studies, and to what continued a favourite enjoyment with him through life, occasional excursions through the country. Having extended his journey to France, it was believed by many who knew the falsehood of the report of his having been educated at St. Omer, that

\* Since the above was written, the writer has been favoured with the following communication from Mr. Dugald Stewart :—

“I am very doubtful of the fact that ever Burke was a candidate for a professorship in Glasgow. I remember perfectly a conversation with Mr. (Adam) Smith on the subject, in the course of which he said that the story was extremely current, but he knew of no evidence upon which it rested ; and he suspected it took its rise entirely from an opinion which he had expressed at Glasgow upon the publication of Burke’s book on the Sublime and Beautiful, that the author of that book would be a great acquisition to the college, if he would accept of a chair.”

This opinion, though entitled to every respect, is not decisive. The evidence is rather the other way ; for the story is not only old, but was repeated three or four times in print during Mr. Burke’s life-time, and on one occasion came immediately under his eye without receiving any formal contradiction from him, which, as it did

he had simply visited that town, and that having described its institutions in company, the report originated of his having been brought up there. But even this is not the fact. He observed at his own table more than once, "He could not but consider it a remarkable circumstance (in allusion to this report) that in three or four journeys he had made in France, St. Omer's happened to be the chief place in the northern provinces which he had *never* visited previous to the year 1775, and this not from design, but accident; for being continually spoken of in Ireland as a place of education, it was no more than natural that a traveller from that country should wish to see it in the indulgence of rational curiosity."

Mr. Wilkes used pleasantly to say that this rumour reminded him of the story of the *three black crows*, and gave the following account of the origin of it. "In reply to an argument used by Burke in the House, Sir," said he, "somebody said it was only fit for a Jesuit to urge. It was clear from his accent, and name, and connexions, that he was an Irishman: an Irishman, and a papist, in the opinions of some of our honest country gentlemen, were synonymous: St. Omer contained a Jesuit seminary: at this Jesuit seminary many Irish priests were educated:—ergo, it was a clear case among the wise men of Gotham, that Burke must be a Jesuit, and must have been educated at St. Omer."

From the indistinct notices which can now be collected, it is said, that his curiosity was very active; the ideal and simply beautiful being mingled with the useful; and pictures and statues, a farm-yard, a mine, or a manufactory, were equally subjects for investigation. His more sedentary pursuits were followed with a degree of assiduity, which vivacious men commonly term *plodding*; but which more sober judgments know to be a good substitute for all other talents, and in fact the only surety for their excellence. His application was unwearied. Unlike most persons of vivid fancy, he had good sense enough to recollect, that the most brilliant imaginations ought not only to have wings to fly, but also legs to stand upon; in other words, that genius, unpropped by knowledge, may serve to amuse, but will rarely be useful in the more important concerns of mankind.

The desire to acquire and the drudgery of acquiring, were pro-

not come under the head of *slander*, he might have deigned to give it. The name of his more successful opponent also is expressly mentioned. The letter from Glasgow alluded to above, bearing upon the point of his being a candidate, is as follows:

"Glasgow, January 29th, 1823.

"My dear Sir,

"I have made inquiry at Principal Taylor in order to learn whether Mr. Edmund Burke was actually a Professor of Logic in the college of Glasgow between the years 1749 and 1752, or was an unsuccessful candidate for the chair.—The Principal states that Mr. Burke was a candidate for that chair in 1752 or 1753, but that he was *unsuccessful*."

moted by habits of life, which concurring testimony, collected about twenty years afterwards from several of his acquaintance, went to prove were more than commonly equable and temperate. Moderation in the pleasurable enjoyments of youth seemed so much a gift from nature, that, at a period of life when the passions too often run riot, he either had few vicious and irregular propensities, or possessed the next best gift of providence,—the power to control them. His excesses were not in dissipation, but in study. He gave way to no licentious inclinations. It is asserted that he did not then know a single game at cards; and that wine was no further a favourite than as it contributed to social intercourse, of which he was at every period of life, particularly with literary and scientific men, extremely fond, so far as the pleasures of conviviality could be enjoyed without its excesses. One of his chief resorts was the Grecian coffee-house, where his habits for a long time were well remembered, and his conversation quoted many years subsequently by members of the Middle Temple Society.

He who devotes his days to the treasuring up of knowledge, may be permitted to set apart the evenings to recreation. While in Dublin he had become attached to the drama from its intimate relation to literature, to poetry, and perhaps more than either, to the displays it exemplifies of human nature: in a vast metropolis like London, indeed, the theatre is almost the natural resort of a literary man; for there, even when most in search of relaxation, he may find some, and not unprofitable, employment for the mind.

The acquaintance of Mr. Murphy who had by this time attempted the stage as a profession, of many of the leading theatrical critics who frequented the Grecian, and of several brother templers equally fond of dramatic amusements, introduced him to some of the principal performers: to Garrick, from whom he confessed to have profited in oratorical action, and in the management of his voice, at whose table he saw many of the most distinguished characters of the age, and where his talents and powers of conversation became more generally known: to Macklin, at whose debating society, which flourished for a few months in 1754, he is believed to have made his first attempt at public speaking, and whom it is said he recommended soon after to Mr. Wedderburn, then coming forward at the bar, in order to get rid of his Scottish accent: and to the celebrated Mrs. (or Miss) Woffington, with whom it has been insinuated, though without any probable foundation, that a still more intimate connexion existed.

This lady, so well known in the annals of the theatre, was famed for possessing beauty, wit, vivacity, fascination of manners, and very considerable powers of mind, which, when performing in Dublin, caused her to be admitted (the only one of her sex



who was so) a member of a famous association of noblemen and gentlemen there, called the Beefsteak club; she possessed almost every thing but that which alone can make a woman respectable—virtue. Men of the highest rank, of learning, of wealth, of wit, and even of morals, sought her society; at her house he extended his acquaintance, and, among others, is said to have been introduced and recommended by her to the Duke of Newcastle, then prime minister; an assertion probably not correct, as his grace, ten years afterwards, had nearly proved a very serious enemy, either from forgetting the recommendation, or suspecting that because it was not attended to, the pen of Mr. Burke had been employed against his vacillating and divided administration between the years 1754 and 1757.

It was about this time that Mr. Burke first entertained the idea of trying his fortune in the American colonies, a purpose which he did not wholly relinquish for more than two years afterward, as will be seen in a subsequent page; but at this moment finding his father to be strongly averse to the design, he surrendered his own decided conviction of its utility to a sense of filial duty, expressed in the following excellent and affectionate letter.

“Honoured Sir,

“I had a letter by the last post from Mr. Nagle,\* in which he tells me that he gave you my letter, and informs me at the same time of the reception which the proposal it contained met with from you and the family. I am, I own, surprised, and very much concerned that this proposal should prove any cause either of grief or anger to you; certain I am that nothing ever was further from my inclination than the least intention of making it so.

“When I informed you of my design, it was not to declare any determined resolution which I had taken, but to desire your opinion on an affair which I believed it advisable for me to engage in. This affair seemed to me neither to be wrong in itself, nor unattended with a reasonable prospect of success. I proposed it to you, as I must and ought to propose to you any thing I think to my advantage, with a view of having your advice upon every material step I should take in it. This is what in prudence I ought to have done, and what every motive of duty and gratitude ought to have obliged me to do. I have nothing nearer my heart than to make you easy; and I have no scheme or design, however reasonable it may seem to me, that I would not gladly sacrifice to your quiet and submit to your judgment. You have surely had trouble enough with a severe disorder, without any addition from uneasiness at my conduct.”

\* His uncle—brother to his mother, to whom, as it will be seen, he afterwards addressed many letters.



(Here this letter, written on a sheet of foolscap, becomes unintelligible from part being torn away; but by the few words which remain, it may be inferred that a place of trust and credit in one of the provinces (of America) was vacant, which he had been offered; and having consulted some persons upon the propriety of accepting it, "they all to a man highly approved of it." The conclusion of the letter remains entire.)

"I shall therefore follow your wishes, not with reluctance but with pleasure; and really nothing has this long time chagrined me so much, as to find that the proposal of this matter has been disagreeable to you: I ought to have a satisfaction in desiring your judgment in whatever appeared to my advantage, as this strongly did. I shall be ready to yield to it always; and to go to Ireland when you think proper, and the end, for which you desire I should go, can be answered.

"I feel to the bottom of my soul for all you have this long time suffered from your disorder, and it grieves me deeply to think that at such a time your sufferings should be at all increased by any thing which looks ill-judged in my conduct. May God make them lighter every moment, and continue to you and my mother very many very happy years, and every blessing I ought to wish you for your care, your tenderness, and your indulgence to me. I am in some trouble and anxiety about this matter; but in real truth, in all my designs I shall have nothing more at heart than to show myself to you and my mother a dutiful, affectionate, and obliged son.

EDMUND BURKE."

"London, March 11, 1755."

It was about this time that Mr. Burke accidentally formed an acquaintance in St. James's Park, with a very enterprising and original character, who, though a native of the East, nearly friendless in England, and who consequently appeared in rather a "questionable shape," presented evidences of a mind so much above his situation, that he instantly, to the best of his power, befriended him. This man, with a little more of the favour of fortune, might have turned out one of the most conspicuous, as he was one of the most adventurous, spirits of modern times. Sir W. Jones thus writes of him (May, 1786), to Sir John Macpherson, when Governor-General of India:

"I have already thanked you for your attentions to Emin, and I beg to repeat them; many in England will be equally thankful. He is a fine fellow; and if active service should be required, he would seek nothing so much as to be placed in the most perilous edge of the battle."—Lord Teignmouth, in his memoirs of Sir W. Jones, gives an abstract of his career:

"Few persons have passed through a greater variety of hardships and perilous adventures than the person mentioned by Sir W. Jones, under the name of Emin. Born at Hamadan in Persia, of Armenian parents, and exposed during his infancy to uncommon disasters, while a mere youth he followed his father

*Macpherson  
vol. 1. 79*

and ruined family to Calcutta. He had there an opportunity of observing the superiority of Europeans in arms, arts, and sciences, over the Asiatics; and the impression which he received from it inspired an invincible desire in Emin to acquire the knowledge which they possessed. For this purpose he determined at all hazards to visit England; and after a long opposition from his father, having obtained his reluctant assent, he adopted the only means left for the accomplishment of his purpose, by working his passage as a common sailor in one of the ships belonging to the East India Company. After his arrival in England, he lost no time in beginning to acquire the instruction which he so anxiously desired, but his progress was retarded by the narrowness of his circumstances, and he was compelled to submit to menial occupations and laborious employments, to procure a subsistence. Fortune favoured his perseverance, and in a moment of despair he was accidentally introduced to the notice of the Duke of Northumberland, and afterwards to that of many gentlemen of rank and fortune, by whose assistance his views were promoted.

“The great object of Emin was to obtain a knowledge of military tactics, in the hopes of employing it successfully in rescuing the liberty and religion of the country of his ancestors from the despotism of the Turks and Persians. After serving with the Prussian and English armies in Germany, he procured the means of transporting himself into the mountains of Armenia, in the view of offering his services to Heraclius, the reigning Prince of Georgia, and of rousing the religious zeal and martial spirit of his countrymen. He had there the mortification to find his resources inadequate to the magnitude of the enterprise, and he was compelled to return disappointed to England. After some time spent in solicitation, he was enabled, by the assistance of his patrons, to proceed with recommendations to Russia, and thence, after various fatigues and impediments, which his fortitude and perseverance surmounted, he reached Teflis, the capital of Georgia. After eight years of wanderings, perils, and distresses, through the mountains of that country and Armenia, he was obliged to abandon his visionary project, and returned to his father in Calcutta. Still anxious for the accomplishment of his plans, and no ways intimidated by past dangers and difficulties, he made a third attempt for the execution of them, and proceeded to Persia. This proved equally unsuccessful, and he again returned to Calcutta.

“In Emin we see the same man who was a sailor, a porter, a menial servant, and subsisting by charity—the companion of nobles, and patronized by princes and monarchs; ever preserving, in his deepest distresses, a sense of honour, a spirit of integrity, a reliance upon Providence, and a firm adherence to the principles of Christianity, in which he had been educated. During his re-

sidence in Calcutta he published an account of his eventful life, which Sir William Jones condescended to revise, so far only as to correct orthographical errors, but without any amendment of the style."

Previous to his introduction to the Duke of Northumberland, Emin had become acquainted with Edmund Burke, whom, as already stated, he accidentally met in the Park. After some conversation, Mr. Burke invited Emin to his apartments at the sign of Pope's Head, a bookseller's near the Temple. Emin, ignorant of the name of the gentleman who had treated him with so much courtesy, begged to be favoured with it; and Mr. Burke politely answered, "Sir, my name is Edmund Burke, at your service; I am a runaway son from a father, as you are." He then presented half-a-guinea to Emin, saying, "Upon my honour, this is what I have at present—please to accept of it."

Mr. Burke next day visited Emin, and assisted him with his advice as to the books which he should read: He introduced him to his relation Mr. William Burke; and for thirty years Emin acknowledges that he was treated with unceasing kindness by both.

At the period of the commencement of his acquaintance with Mr. Burke, Emin had little left for his maintenance, and the prospect of accomplishing the purpose of his voyage to England became daily more gloomy. "Had not Mr. Burke consoled him now and then," to use the words of Emin, he might have been lost for ever through despair; but his friend always advised him to put his trust in God, and he never missed a day without seeing Emin. He was writing books at the time, and desired the author (i. e. Emin) to copy them: the first was an imitation of the late Lord Bolingbroke's Letter; the second, the "Treatise of Sublime and Beautiful." The whole of this story is characteristic in a high degree of the humanity and generosity which always distinguished this great and virtuous ornament of our nation.

To an application from Emin many years subsequent to this period, to procure for him some situation of profit in India, Mr. Burke wrote the following reply:—

TO YUSEPH EMIN, CALCUTTA.

"My dear old friend Emin,

"You reproach me but too justly for not having regularly answered your letters, but I assure you that neither my wife nor I have forgot you; nor has my son been left unacquainted with our regard and good wishes to you; so that he begs leave to be ranked among your old friends, though you could only know him in his infancy.

"I have never had much interest in India. Lord Clive once thought himself obliged to me for having done what I thought an act of justice towards him. The only use I made of his inclina-



tion towards me, was to get him to recommend you to some military promotion. This was in the year 1772. I am convinced he did write, but I believe he was far from well with the people then in power. Since that time none of those who governed India, either abroad or at home, have been my particular friends. Some, perhaps, have been ill-disposed towards me. My parliamentary occupation with regard to India was naturally not very pleasing to those, the faults of whose government it fell to my lot to reprehend. My friends have suffered; I have not gained. I shall, however, be well paid for a great deal of trouble if I can make the burden of the English government over the people of India a little more tolerable than it has been.

“As to you, my friend, you have been tossed in many storms, and in many parts of the world. It is fit that your declining years should have some rest. I am glad you have sought it in the comforts of a good conscience, and the domestic satisfactions of a good father of a family; every thing else is but show without substance.

“There are many changes here of all kinds since you left us. The Duke of Northumberland, your friend, is dead. Mrs. Montague is still alive, and when I see her, I shall put her in mind of you. Many changes too, of a much more striking nature have happened since you and I first became acquainted. Who could have thought the day I first saw you in St. James’s Park, that this kingdom would rule the greater part of India? But kingdoms rise and pass away—emperors are captive and blinded—pedlars become emperors. We are alive however, and have, I hope, sense enough to derive lessons of private consolation from great events. They do not always teach the great, for whom they seem to be made; somebody ought to profit of them. You have attempted great things on noble principles. You have failed, and you are better off for yourself than if you had succeeded; for you are an honest, and if you please, a happy private man. Believe me, if occasion offers, I shall not forget you. My son and Mrs. Burke desire their kindest remembrance; and pray believe me to be, with great esteem and affection, my worthy old friend,

“Your most faithful and obedient

“humble servant,

March 29, 1789.

“EDMUND BURKE.”

The ambition of being distinguished in literature seems to have been one of his earliest, as it was one of his latest passions; prompted as much perhaps by that early maturity of mind of which his letters and contemporary testimony furnish evidence, as the natural desire of advancing his fortune and reputation. Frequent intercourse with the literary society of the metropolis would necessarily inspire the wish to test the vigour of his pen

by comparing it with that of others through the customary medium of the press; though the state of letters in London, which he alludes to in the communication to Mr. Smith, by observing that much more was to be made by the figures of arithmetic than the figures of rhetoric, does not appear to have inspired any very sanguine expectations of authorship being a source of pecuniary advantage. But the disappointment experienced in the projected transatlantic expedition, in all probability became an additional stimulus to endeavour to distinguish himself in some leading department of life.

The first productions even of great writers are seldom preserved, and are perhaps seldom worth preserving. Those of Mr. Burke do not seem to have escaped the general fate, as there is no doubt that some pieces of his were published previous to those which appear first in his works; little more, however, can be ascertained respecting them now, than what contemporary remembrance, and possibly conjecture, supplied, after his name had become familiar to the public ear.

One of the first was believed by Mr. Murphy to be a poem, or poetical translation from the Latin, which, from the preceding specimen, is not improbable; but as nothing further is known, its success could not be considerable, and might have induced a distaste in the writer to any future attempt of length in that species of composition. It is certain that soon after his arrival in London he wrote to Ireland for anecdotes to engraft into concise accounts of Mr. Brooke, whom he had assailed as a politician, but whom he found of more importance than he expected, and of his new acquaintance Mrs. Woffington: these, with the poetry in question, may possibly be traced by the more diligent collectors of the pamphlets and periodical publications of the time. The Essay on the Drama, preserved in his works, is believed to be of the same date. So also may be many of the materials collected for a work on the oppressed condition of the catholics of Ireland, which are likewise among his posthumous remains. Politics were probably not neglected; and in criticism, for which his range of information and keenness of remark offered peculiar facilities, he is supposed to have written much.

His first avowed work, the "Vindication of Natural Society," which came out in the spring of 1756, may in fact be termed a piece of philosophical criticism couched under the guise of serious irony. It was an octavo pamphlet of 106 pages, published by Cooper at the price of 1s. 6d.; and originated in an opinion generally expressed in literary society, of the style of Lord Bolingbroke being not only the best of that time, but in itself wholly imitable; and in the approbation expressed by some persons of what were called his philosophical opinions which had been published in March, 1754. 201. 1. 90

The design of Mr. Burke was to produce a covert mimicry

both of his style and principles; and particularly, by pushing the latter to their ultimate results, to force conviction on the mind of the reader of their unsoundness, by showing that the arguments employed by the peer against religion, applied as strongly against every other institution of civilized men. His lordship's philosophy, such as it was, was the newest pattern of the day, and of course excited considerable notice, as coming from a man who had made so conspicuous a figure in politics; and whose career, after a youth spent in the stews, and a manhood in turbulence and disaffection to the government of his country, seemed appropriately terminated by an old age of infidelity. Accustomed to disregard honest and wise opinions on other matters, he wanted courage to show his contempt of them on this; but at his death left to Mallet, a brother infidel, the office of ushering his benevolent legacy of deism into light; which drew from Dr. Johnson, when asked his opinion of it, the exclamation "A scoundrel! who spent his life in charging a popgun against Christianity; and a coward! who afraid of the report of his own gun, left half-a-crown to a hungry Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death."

The novelty of the plan of attack upon the dialectics of the noble philosopher, caused some stir in the literary circles, though it has been untruly stated by a virulent enemy, in the guise of a biographer, to have fallen still-born from the press. Lord Chesterfield and Bishop Warburton for a short time believed it genuine; Mallet, it has been said, went to Dodsley's shop when filled with the literati, purposely to disavow it; and the periodical critics, though alive to the deception when their strictures appeared in print, gave it a full examination, and much praise for the ingenuity shown in the execution.

The imitation indeed was so perfect as to constitute identity rather than resemblance. It was not merely the language, style, and general eloquence of the original which had been caught; but the whole mind of the peer, his train of thought, the power to enter into his conceptions, seemed to be transfused into the pen of his imitator with a fidelity and 'grace beyond the reach of art.' Several able critics of the present day have expressed their admiration of it in strong terms; one of them, in a celebrated periodical work, alluding to this power of copying an author in *all* his peculiarities, says,—

"In Burke's imitation of Bolingbroke (the most perfect specimen perhaps that ever will exist of the art in question) we have all the qualities which distinguish the style, or we may indeed say the genius of that noble writer, concentrated and brought before us; so that an ordinary reader, who in perusing his genuine works merely felt himself dazzled and disappointed—delighted and wearied he could not tell why, is now enabled to form a definite and precise conception of the causes of those opposite



sensations—and to trace to the nobleness of the diction, and the inaccuracy of the reasoning—the boldness of the propositions, and the rashness of the inductions—the magnificence of the pretensions, and the feebleness of the performance, those contradictory judgments with the confused result of which he had been perplexed in his study of the original.”

This tract, which was reprinted in 1765, is perhaps equally remarkable for having anticipated many of the wild notions, under the name of philosophy, broached a few years ago in the general rage to overturn old opinions as well as old institutions. It was amusing to see what were first introduced to the world as specimens of ingenious absurdity, retailed to the ignorant of our own day as the legitimate inductions of philosophy. For in this piece may be found (advanced of course ironically) something of the same cant about the evils of governments, the misdeeds of statesmen, the injustice of aristocratic distinctions, the troubles engendered by religion, the tyranny and uncertainty of laws, the virtues of the poor over the rich, with much more of what the author, when speaking seriously, justly termed abuse of reason. Though gifted with no common degree of foresight, he could have no idea that these phantoms of philosophy, conjured up for his amusement in 1756, should be opposed to him forty years afterwards as substantial realities; that his whole strength should be required to put down his own shadows.

In one of his later productions, Mr. Burke has characterized him as a shallow writer whom nobody now perused; and the fact is strongly indicative of the fleeting nature of that fame which is not grounded upon a reasonable desire to advance the real wisdom and solid interests of mankind. Mr. Burke used to mention at his table, that the first Lord Littleton told him that Bolingbroke never committed any of his works to paper himself, but invariably dictated to a secretary, which accounted for the tautology and repetitions so common in his writings. In company he was fluent and eloquent, speaking, or rather dictating to his hearers, with an air of authority, more resembling the formal harangue of the house of Commons than the usual tone of conversation, and not allowing himself to be interrupted or contradicted.

A few months afterwards, in the same year, appeared “A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,” published for Dodsley, at the price of 3s. Of this celebrated work, so long before the public, which now forms a text-book in liberal education, and one of reference in our universities, little more need be said than that it is perfectly original in the execution and design. Longinus indeed had written on the sublime, and Addison partially on grandeur and beauty, but neither of them profoundly nor distinctly; they exemplify and illustrate rather than analyze or dive to the sources

of those impressions on the mind; and they even confound the sublime with the beautiful on many occasions! But Mr. Burke's book marks the line between them so distinctly, as that they cannot be mistaken; he investigates the constituents and appearances of each scientifically, and illustrates his views with great happiness. Johnson considered it a model of true philosophical criticism. Blair, who praises its originality and ingenuity, has profited much by it in his remarks on sublimity and beauty, as well as in the theory of that often-discussed quality, taste, which in this work is justly observed to prevail in our minds "either from a greater degree of natural sensibility, or from a closer and longer attention to the object."

It is well known, that toward the decline of life, Mr. Burke was solicited by several of his intimate friends, particularly Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Lawrence, to revise and enlarge this treatise by the addition of such facts and observations as thirty years must have supplied. The popularity of the work, they said, and the excellence of what was already done, fully deserved that it should be rendered as complete as possible. His reply usually was, that he was no longer fit to pursue speculative matters of that sort; his mind had been occupied so completely by other and more active business, that he could not recur to them with that ease and satisfaction to himself which such investigations required; and besides, several other writers had pursued the track he had chalked out, so that there was little of novelty to add. To Dr. Lawrence he once said, he was never more fit for abstract speculations than when at college and immediately afterwards—that he had about that time speculated long and deeply—and in proof of the fact said, he had begun the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* before he was nineteen years old, and had kept it by him for seven years before it was published.

As indicative of character, of extensive and various observation, and accurate deduction, both these productions are remarkable, particularly the latter, considering the time of life at which it was written. From the nature of the subject independent of his own testimony, it is evident that it could not be a work of haste, but of much inquiry, of keen penetration, and of diligent remark, continued for a considerable period of time; and was finished, as we have seen, before he was twenty-six; an age at which indifferent rhymes or loose love-stories form the common exercises of young templers, and when scarcely any man, whatever be his attainments, thinks of starting for one of the highest degrees in philosophy, much less is enabled to make good his claim to the distinction. Both works are evidences of a mind early and deeply reflective, investigating for itself, and coming out of the inquiry, not with a desire to shine in paradox, or to astonish the world by propounding something very new or

very adverse to all received opinions, but with the conviction that the general belief of mankind in the main questions that interest them, religion, politics, and philosophy, is right. The simple, unornamented style of the Inquiry, is in good taste as applied to a philosophical subject; and differs in every respect from most of his subsequent oratorical efforts.

Continued application to these pursuits produced a fit of illness—too often the lot of the labourer in literature—whose existence, though gratifying to the pride of the human mind, from a real or fancied superiority over others, is in practice one of the most irksome; for it admits of little relaxation. It must be pursued chiefly in solitude. Society, which cheers and animates most other men in their calling, becomes an impediment to the more brilliant conceptions of the author. His business is with books; his chosen companions, the mute yet vivacious offspring of the brain. Bound to his desk, either by over-ruling necessity, or scarcely less forcible inclination, the lighter enjoyments of life cannot be often tasted without interfering with the continuity of his pursuits. Before him lies the stated task—the page not of nature but of the printer—to which he must sometimes unwillingly turn when more attractive objects invite him elsewhere; for the sun may shine, the fields look green, the flowers bloom in vain for him, who in sallying forth to refresh his jaded intellect or exhausted frame, must neglect the occupation which possibly gives him subsistence. Such also is the case now and then with the too diligent student. Cumberland has given a recital of bodily suffering endured in the acquisition of learning; and Burke, had he written his own life, might have told a story still more distressing.

For the re-establishment of his health, Bath and Bristol were again resorted to with success. In the former city resided his countryman Dr. Christopher Nugent, a very amiable man, and an esteemed and able physician, who having some previous acquaintance with Mr. Burke, kindly invited him to his house as better adapted to the wants and situation of an invalid. An attachment to his daughter, Miss Jane Mary Nugent, was the result; and the guest offered her nearly all he had at this time to offer except what his father supplied, his heart and hand, which were accepted; she was born in the south of Ireland, though educated chiefly in England; her father was a Roman catholic, her mother a rigid presbyterian, who not only stipulated for the free enjoyment of her own religion, but for the privilege of educating her daughters in the same tenets, which were therefore adopted by Mrs. Burke. It has been asserted, however, either through utter ignorance or the most determined animosity, that she was a catholic, and among a hundred other shameful slanders vented against her husband, by political enemies assuming even to write his life, was one, that he kept a popish priest in the



house for her, upon whom he continually exercised his love for deistical raillery. It is difficult to conceive more malicious or more abominable falsehoods, which in this as well as in a hundred other instances, had not even a shadow of foundation; they are an epitome, however, of that "hunt of obloquy," in his own words, "which has ever pursued me with a full cry through life."

This union was to him a source of comfort ever after. Added to affectionate admiration of his talents, she possessed accomplishments, good sense, goodness of heart, and a sweetness of manners and disposition, which served to allay many of the anxieties of his future career—the labours to attain fame and independence, the fretful moments attendant on severe study, the irritations produced by party and political zeal, and the tempestuous passions engendered by constant contention in active parliamentary life. He repeatedly declared that "every care vanished the moment he entered under his own roof." He wrote the following beautifully descriptive prose paper, *the idea of a perfect wife*, which he presented to her one morning on the anniversary of their marriage, delicately heading the paper thus, "The Character of ———," leaving her to fill up the blank. To his friends also, the earliest as well as the latest, she was equally a theme of praise. William Burke thus writes of her in March, 1766:—"Poor Mrs. Burke has been visited by a most severe cold; the delicacy of her frame, and that infinity of intrinsic worth that makes her dear to us, raised some anxious apprehensions; but, thank God! she is so much better that our fears are no more." Men of genius are seldom so fortunate in their partners, or at least seldom think themselves so; for being by nature an ideal race, they look perhaps for more perfections than commonly fall to the lot of frail humanity, and expecting to meet with angels, are sadly disappointed in finding mere women.

The ideas of the piece alluded to partake of a high order of poetry, but perhaps more fully and distinctly expressed than the restricted nature of rhyme is likely to allow to any other than the effusions of the very first poets. It is as follows:—

"The Character of ———."

"I intend to give my idea of a woman; if it at all answers any original, I shall be pleased; for if such a person as I would describe really exists, she must be far superior to my description: and such as I must love too well to be able to paint as I ought.

"She is handsome, but it is a beauty not arising from features, from complexion, or from shape; she has all three in an high degree, but it is not by these she touches an heart; it is all that sweetness of temper, benevolence, innocence, and sensibility, which a face can express that forms her beauty.

"She has a face that just raises your attention at first sight, it

grows on you every moment, and you wonder it did no more than raise your attention at first.

“ Her eyes have a mild light, but they awe you when she pleases; they command like a good man out of office, not by authority but by virtue.

“ Her features are not perfectly regular; that sort of exactness is more to be praised than to be loved; for it is never animated.

“ Her stature is not tall; she is not made to be the admiration of every body, but the happiness of one.

“ She has all the firmness that does not exclude delicacy: she has all the softness that does not imply weakness.

“ There is often more of the coquet shown in an affected plainness than in a tawdry finery; she is always clean without preciseness or affectation. Her gravity is a gentle thoughtfulness, that softens the features without discomposing them; she is usually grave.

“ Her smiles are inexpressible.

“ Her voice is a low, soft music, not formed to rule in public assemblies, but to charm those who can distinguish a company from a crowd; it has this advantage, you must come close to her to hear it.

“ To describe her body describes her mind; one is the transcript of the other. Her understanding is not shown in the variety of matters it exerts itself on, but in the goodness of the choice she makes.

“ She does not display it so much in saying or doing striking things, as in avoiding such as she ought not to say or do.

“ She discovers the right and wrong of things not by reasoning but sagacity: most women, and many good ones, have a closeness and something selfish in their dispositions; she has a true generosity of temper; the most extravagant cannot be more unbounded in their liberality, the most covetous not more cautious in the distribution.

“ No person of so few years can know the world better; no person was ever less corrupted by that knowledge.

“ Her politeness seems to flow rather from a natural disposition to oblige, than from any rules on that subject; and therefore never fails to strike those who understand good breeding and those who do not.

“ She does not run with a girlish eagerness into new friendships, which, as they have no foundation in reason, serve only to multiply and embitter disputes; it is long before she chooses, but then it is fixed for ever; and the first hours of romantic friendships are not warmer than hers after the lapse of years. As she never disgraces her good nature by severe reflections on any body, so she never degrades her judgment by immoderate or ill-placed praises; for every thing violent is contrary to her gentleness of disposition and the evenness of her virtue; she

has a steady and firm mind, which takes no more from the female character than the solidity of marble does from its polish and lustre. She has such virtues as make us value the truly great of our own sex; she has all the winning graces, that make us love even the faults we see in the weak and beautiful of hers."

The following tribute of respect to her, with the humorous conclusion, deprecating the criticism of the rest of the family, is believed to be from the pen of Dr. Brocklesby. It was presented to her about 1774:—

*To Mrs. Burke, on New Year's Day.*

May the new year, O Delia, bring  
To you each joy that mortals know;  
And may you, blest with cheerful spring,  
Ne'er feel the iron winter blow.  
May all your hours, your minutes roll,  
Exempt from grief, exempt from pain,  
Except the tear that melts your soul,  
When shed, for suffering worth, in vain.

May all the white and happy hours,  
Which grandsire Janus has in store,  
Still strew thy path of life with flowers,  
And smoothe each rugged furrow o'er.  
May sweet contentment soothe thy mind,  
And blooming health glow through thy frame,  
So still unchanged, your soul you'll find,  
And still that tranquil breast the same.

Whilst thy loved lord makes senates hear,  
What every Briton ought to know;  
In strains might charm an Attic ear,  
Or make the Roman's \* ashes glow;  
Fair partner of his praise and fame,  
Long mayest thou soothe his thoughtful breast;  
Whilst the bright undiminished flame,  
That Hymen warmed, still makes you blest.

Long may thy lovely darling boy  
Thy comfort be, thy hope and pride,  
And still each parent's blooming joy,  
His father's conduct be his guide.  
Thus emulous of such a sire,  
In honour clear, sincere in truth,  
Virtue shall all his soul inspire,  
And wisdom guard the fire of youth.

If (Heavens defend us!) if W—— B——†  
For my sins, should happen this folly to see,  
The paper he'd tear, say the bard was an ass,  
Who ventured such tags for verses to pass,  
And swear that his forehead was sheathed in brass. }

For the Doctor † I know, such is his good nature,  
He'll govern each muscle, and bridle each feature,  
And though long a judge of the poet's demerit,  
Still in hopes of amendment, will not damp his spirit.

\* Cicero.

† William Burke.

‡ Dr. Nugent.



R—— B—— \* will laugh for five minutes or more,  
But then he'll forget it and all will be o'er.

To you then, dear Madam, for mercy I plead,  
Do but think it well meant, tho' ill sung and ill said,  
And if now to poor culprit you a pardon extend,  
He may prove a good boy, and next year perhaps mend.

The war then lately commenced with France exciting attention to the American colonies as one of the chief points in dispute, there came out in April, 1757, in two volumes, octavo, "An Account of the European Settlements in America."

Doubts have been often started whether Mr. Burke was the sole or joint author of this work; there is, however, no question but that he wrote, if not the whole of it, at least by far the greater part. Mr. Shackleton, who had no other means of knowing the fact than from himself or his family, always stated it to be wholly his. The editor of the edition published by Stockdale in 1808, asserts positively that he saw the receipt for the copy money, amounting to fifty guineas, in Mr. Burke's own hand-writing. Internal evidence tends to the same conclusion both in language and manner, and particularly in some phrases, such as (when speaking of exchanges of territory) the "cutting and shuffling of a treaty of peace," and others equally peculiar, which may be found in his future works. Toward the end of the second volume occurs a passage on population nearly the same in idea and expression as used by him in an argument with Johnson on the same subject some years afterwards, and repeated by Boswell. Similar coincidences may be traced on other points connected with political economy; and the account of the North American colonies, which beyond all question is his, contains the germ of some of his arguments, and much of that intimate acquaintance with the people and country, afterwards displayed by him in parliament. It may be remarked also, that he contends for the probability of a north-west passage, which at the present time occupies so much of the public attention.

On the other hand, the late Lord Macartney said it was the joint production of Edmund, Richard his brother who had joined him from Ireland on commercial pursuits, and their name-sake and most intimate friend through life, William Burke; his lordship was on the most friendly terms with them all, and might have understood the fact to be so, but he himself did not arrive in London till above a year after the publication. It is also true that Edmund did not subsequently avow it, though for this there might be sufficient reasons; his reputation for instance, did not require such an addition, especially if it could be useful to his brother, or to William Burke; he might not wish to claim as his own what was in part the work of others, however small that part might be; and being brought out on an emergency, he might

\* Richard Burke.

deem it an unsatisfactory as well as a hasty production, unworthy of his fame.

Whether wholly his own or not, the sketch, for it professes to be little more,—and an apology is made in the preface for inequality in the style which the reader may not readily discover,—is in many parts masterly, the reflections just and often original, but paraded perhaps too formally and frequently before the reader, so as sometimes to interfere with the facts, or almost to supersede them. The style is what may be termed ambitious, aiming at depth, terseness, and brevity, yet too frequently betraying the effort: no writer, however, need be ashamed of such a work. Mr. Dugald Stewart terms it a masterly sketch. Abbé Raynal is believed to have profited much by it in his history; and at home its popularity was such as to reach a seventh edition; the published price of the two volumes, containing above seven hundred octavo pages, was only eight shillings; this, while it accounts for the small sum received for the copyright, impresses the fact of the little encouragement then given to literature.

Soon after this time, Mr. Burke, under the pressure of temporary difficulties, is said to have disposed of his books, his coat of arms pasted in some of them, according to the story, having inadvertently disclosed the secret. Hence it has been asserted that he was frequently so; and those who would throw a slight of some sort upon his memory, in order, by the absence of any more substantial failings to bring greatness down to their own level by some means or other, have said that for many years his pen, exerted in the periodical publications, afforded him the only means he enjoyed of support.

For these assertions there is little or no foundation. The simple fact of declining to be called to the bar, is of itself evidence that had he not had other resources, he would not have declined the profession of a barrister, calculated as he was beyond all question to be the greatest that ever addressed a jury. His father, who possessed a handsome income from his profession, allowed him about 200*l.* per annum, at that time a liberal sum, during much of the time he spent in London; and though any additional supplies derived from the exercise of his literary talents were doubtless sufficiently acceptable, as they are to much richer men, it is certain they were not considerable. Literature, as may be believed from the sum given for the work just noticed, was then a wretched trade. Johnson the first author of the age, could barely elevate himself above abject poverty; and parliamentary, legal, and theatrical reporting, now a source of emolument to many, and by which several of the law students are enabled to keep their terms with little expense to their friends, were then in a great degree unknown.

There is indeed an amusing, but rather an absurd, coyness among the scribbling race themselves, about being known to write

for periodical works, and to receive payment for their labours. After all as no man writes well by intuition, so magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers, form the natural nurseries for unfledged authors in which they are enabled to try the strength of their wings before engaging in more arduous flights. Some make the experiment for amusement, some for improvement, some to circulate a favourite opinion, and some who are nevertheless not at all dependent on such small and casual supplies, to be enabled by the produce of their pens to add to their libraries.\*

For what reason there should be any slight attached to the idea of profiting in a pecuniary way by literary labour, it is difficult to conceive, except indeed it be the alarming apprehension to the person receiving it, that he may thence be suspected of being *poor*. To accept the reward, however, is not necessarily to be in want of it, or to be under obligation by receiving it. "He who writes otherwise than for money," said Dr. Johnson, "is a fool." So thought Mr. Burke; so said Darwin; so say, and so think, most others whose writings are in request by the world, or who know the severe and solitary toil by which alone a good work can be produced, and who in other respects care nothing for money. An author must not be frightened by the term *hireling*; for no man is such except he who sells his principles: or rather perhaps it may be said, that in fact all men who receive pay from royalty downwards, are in this sense of the word hirelings. No man in any station of life, for instance, no statesman, no lawyer, no physician, no clergyman, no soldier, gives his labours, mental or bodily, to society, without hire. Why then should not the author also have his hire without slight or reproach? He who writes gratuitously for a bookseller, works for a man probably richer than himself. This species of charity is therefore misapplied. If a writer can afford to be generous, let it be to those who are really in want; for the fruits of his ingenuity, whether diurnal, monthly, or quarterly, if not necessary to himself, may be advantageously applied to purposes of private benevolence.

Some few years ago, when a member of the House of Commons, of the party of Mr. Fox, under the influence of erroneous information, had been throwing some slight upon the memory of Mr. Burke, as having been obliged to write in the periodical publications for subsistence previously to coming into parliament, Mrs. Burke, who saw the statement in the newspapers, ran her pen through it in the presence of some friends, observing, "Mr. Burke himself would not take the trouble to contradict this,

\* A young author, perfectly independent of literature as a trade, lately received from the conductor of a periodical work a few pounds for some of his essays, which he directly laid out in books. "This money," said he, "gives me more pleasure than ten times the sum arising from any other source. I take pride in it, because by the labour of my own mind I am enabled to make myself more extensively acquainted with the minds of others."



nor indeed any thing else they say of him, but really I have no patience with such reports; I declare them from my own knowledge gross and unfounded falsehoods; that he received money for his publications is true, but the amount was very small—not worth mentioning as a means of support.”

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### CHAPTER III.

Abridgment of English History.—Annual Register.—Acquaintance with Dr. Johnson.—Anecdotes of a Canon of Lichfield.—Mrs. Ann Pitt, Bishop Warburton, Hume, Lord Charlemont, Mr. Fitzherbert.—Connexion with Mr. Gerrard Hamilton.—Letter to Mr. Flood.—Documents connected with Mr. Burke's Pension.—Anecdote of Mr. Burke's humanity.

THE reputation of the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* being quickly diffused through the literary world by the trading critics, as well as by the most eminent private judges of the day, immediately stamped the author's fame as a man of uncommon ingenuity and very profound philosophical investigation; though some of his theories did not, as might be expected in inquiring into matters of such strict intellectual acuteness and refinement, receive universal assent.

In 1757 a new edition was called for, to which was prefixed, for the first time, the introductory chapter on taste. To his father, who had not been well pleased with his desertion of the law, a copy was sent, which produced in return a present of 100*l.* as a testimony of paternal admiration. Another copy he dispatched to his friend Shackleton, and on one of the blank leaves wrote, as expressive of his affectionate and unceasing regard—

*Accipe et hæc manuum tibi quæ monumenta meorum  
Sint —et longum testentur amorem :*

and all his future political works, especially the *Thoughts on the Discontents*, the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, were transmitted to the same friend.

In the letter accompanying the *Essay*, dated from Battersea, August 10, 1757, he says, in jocular allusion to his matrimonial adventure, “I am now a married man myself, and therefore claim some respect from the married fraternity; at least for your own sakes you will not pretend to consider me the worse man.” And in another part of this letter he apologizes for a long silence by his “manner of life, chequered with various designs, sometimes in London, sometimes in remote parts of the country, sometimes in France, and shortly, please God, to be in America.”

The design expressed in the latter part of this sentence never, as has been already stated, took effect. Some persons have believed that it was the invitation of an old fellow-collegian settled in Philadelphia, who thought the sphere of the new world offered a less crowded area for the display of his talents in the law. Whatever may have been the inducement, fortunately he did not persevere in his purpose when the death of his father made him more his own master: genius might have lost one of her most favoured offspring, and England one of her greatest ornaments. But the fact is curious in itself, as expressive of the same vague idea of expatriation which prevailed among many of the extraordinary political characters of the preceding century, and with some of the men of genius, as Goldsmith, Burns, and others, of our own.

In January, 1758, his domestic circle received an addition by the birth of that favourite son, who through life was beloved with even more than parental fondness, and whose death, at the early age of 35, tended in the opinion of his friends to hasten his own. Another son, named Edmund, born about two years afterwards, died in infancy. The wants of an increasing family proved an irresistible stimulus to industry by all the means within his power, and his pen at this time was actively employed on a variety of subjects, some of which, never published, as well as others of an earlier date, though pretty well ascertained to be in existence, have not been recovered by his executors.

One of those which remained in his own possession, was an "Essay towards an Abridgment of English History," which he had intimated to his Ballitore friends some time previously, it was his intention to write at length.

Eight sheets of this work were printed for Dodsley in 1757, but it was then discontinued, probably from hearing that Hume was engaged in treating of the same period of time, and perhaps from being unable to satisfy his own taste, which, on an historical subject, was fastidious. It displays however, a spirit of close research into the earlier history of our island, not exceeded, perhaps not equalled, by works of much greater pretensions, and with more antiquarian knowledge than could possibly be expected; and that portion devoted to the aboriginal people, to the Druids, to the settlement of the Saxons, and to the details relative to their laws and institutions, contains some information new to the general reader. On the whole it is perhaps the best abstract of that remote period we possess, without any admixture of the fabulous stories so common to the age; and to youth it will be found particularly instructive. The style differs from that of the "European Settlements" in aiming at less of point and effect, but it possesses simplicity and perspicuity; the characters of William the Conqueror, Henry II, and John, are happily drawn,

and the distinguished circumstances of their reigns well selected for narration, considered as a work written at the age of 26.

The sketch which he gives of the venerable Bede, as the great father of English literature, and preeminently distinguished in a peculiarly dark age (between the years 672 and 735), will interest many.

“The great and justest boast of this monastery (that of Landisford, at the mouth of the river Tees, afterwards removed to the vicinity of Durham,) is the venerable Bede, who was educated and spent his whole life there. An account of his writings is an account of the English learning in that age, taken in its most advantageous view. Many of his works remain, and he wrote both in prose and verse, and upon all sorts of subjects. His theology forms the most considerable part of his writings. He wrote comments upon almost the whole scripture, and several Homilies on the principal Festivals of the Church. Both the comments and sermons are generally allegorical in the construction of the text, and simply moral in the application. In these discourses several things seem strained and fanciful; but herein he followed entirely the manner of the earlier fathers, from whom the greatest part of his divinity is not so much imitated as extracted. The systematic and logical method, which seems to have been first introduced into theology by John of Damascus, and which afterwards was known by the name of school-divinity, was not then in use, at least in the western church; though soon after it made an amazing progress. In this scheme the allegorical gave way to the literal explication; the imagination had less scope; and the affections were less touched, but it prevailed by an appearance more solid and philosophical; by an order more scientific; and by a readiness of application, either for the solution or the exciting of doubts and difficulties. They also cultivated in this monastery the study of natural philosophy and astronomy. There remains of Bede, one entire book, and some scattered essays on these subjects. This book, *De Rerum Naturá*, is concise and methodical, and contains no very contemptible abstract of the physics, which were taught in the decline of the Roman Empire. It was somewhat unfortunate, that the infancy of English learning was supported by the dotage of the Roman, and that even the spring-head from whence they drew their instructions was itself corrupted. However, the works of the great masters of the ancient science still remained; but in natural philosophy the worst was the most fashionable.

“The Epicurean physics, the most approaching to rational, had long lost all credit by being made the support of an impious theology and a loose morality. The fine visions of Plato fell into some discredit by the abuse which heretics had made of them; and the writings of Aristotle seem to have been then the only ones



much regarded, even in natural philosophy, in which branch of science alone they are unworthy of him. Beda entirely follows his system. The appearances of nature are explained by matter and form, and by the four vulgar elements; acted upon by the four supposed qualities of hot, dry, moist, and cold. His astronomy is on the common system of the ancients; sufficient for the four purposes to which they applied it; but otherwise imperfect and grossly erroneous. He makes the moon larger than the earth; though a reflection on the nature of eclipses, which he understood, might have satisfied him of the contrary, but he had so much to copy, that he had little time to examine. These speculations, however erroneous, were still useful; for though men err in assigning the causes of natural operations, the works of nature are by this means brought under their consideration; which cannot be done without enlarging the mind. The science may be false, or frivolous; the improvement will be real.

“It may here be remarked, that soon afterwards the monks began to apply themselves to astronomy and chronology from the disputes, which were carried on with so much heat, and so little effect, concerning the proper time of celebrating Easter; and the English owed the cultivation of these noble sciences to one of the most trivial controversies of ecclesiastical discipline. Beda did not confine his attention to those superior sciences. He treated of music, and of rhetoric, of grammar, and of the art of versification, and of arithmetic, both by letters and on the fingers: and his work on this last subject is the only one, in which that piece of antique curiosity has been preserved to us. All these are short pieces; some of them are in the catechetical method; and seem designed for the immediate use of the pupils in his monastery, in order to furnish them with some leading ideas in the rudiments of these arts, then newly introduced into this country.

“He likewise made, and probably for the same purpose, a very ample and valuable collection of short philosophical, political, and moral maxims from Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, and other sages of heathen antiquity. He made a separate book of shining common-places and remarkable passages, extracted from the works of Cicero; of whom he was a great admirer; though he seems to have been not an happy or diligent imitator of his style. From a view of these pieces, we may form an idea of what stock in the sciences the English at that time possessed; and what advance they had made. That work of Beda, which is the best known and most esteemed, is the Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation. Disgraced by want of choice, and frequently by a confused ill-disposition of his matter, and blemished with a degree of credulity next to infantine, it is still a valuable, and for the time a surprising performance. The book opens with a description of this island, which would not have disgraced a classical author; and he has prefixed to it a chronological abridgment of sacred

and profane history, connected from the beginning of the world; which, though not critically adapted to his main design, is of far more intrinsic value, and indeed displays a vast fund of historical erudition. On the whole, though this father of the English learning seems to have been but a genius of the middle class neither elevated nor subtle, and one who wrote in a low style, simple but not elegant, yet when we reflect upon the time in which he lived, the place in which he spent his whole life, within the walls of a monastery, in so remote and wild a country, it is impossible to refuse him the praise of an incredible industry, and a generous thirst of knowledge.

“That a nation, who not fifty years before had but just begun to emerge from a barbarism so perfect, that they were unfurnished even with an alphabet, should, in so short a time, have established so flourishing a seminary of learning, and have produced so eminent a teacher, is a circumstance, which I imagine no other nation besides England can boast.”

After adverting to the leading circumstances of the reign of William the Conqueror, he gives the following summary of the character of that monarch, which though drawn with no common skill, will by many probably be thought too favourable—

“There is nothing more memorable in history, than the actions, fortunes, and character of this great man; whether we consider the grandeur of the plans he formed; the courage and wisdom with which they were executed, or the splendour of that success, which, adorning his youth, continued without the smallest reverse to support his age, even to the last moments of his life. He lived above seventy years, and reigned within ten years as long as he lived; sixty over his dukedom, above twenty over England; both of which he acquired or kept by his own magnanimity, with hardly any other title than he derived from his arms; so that he might be reputed, in all respects, as happy as the highest ambition, the most fully gratified, can make a man. The silent, inward satisfactions of domestic happiness he neither had, nor sought.

“He had a body suited to the character of his mind, erect, firm, large, and active; whilst to be active was a praise; a countenance stern, and which became command. Magnificent in his living, reserved in his conversation, grave in his common deportment, but relaxing with a wise facetiousness, he knew how to relieve his mind and preserve his dignity; for he never forfeited by a personal acquaintance that esteem he had acquired by his great actions.

“Unlearned in books, he formed his understanding by the rigid discipline of a large and complicated experience. He knew men much, and therefore generally trusted them but little; but when he knew any man to be good, he reposed in him an entire confidence, which prevented his prudence from degenerating into a vice. He had vices in his composition, and great ones; but they

were vices of a great mind: ambition, the malady of every extensive genius; and avarice, the madness of the wise: one chiefly actuated his youth; the other governed his age. The vices of young and light minds, the joys of wine, and the pleasures of love, never reached his aspiring nature. The general run of men he looked on with contempt, and treated with cruelty when they opposed him. Nor was the rigour of his mind to be softened but with the appearance of extraordinary fortitude in his enemies, which, by a sympathy congenial to his own virtues, always excited his admiration, and ensured his mercy. So that there were often seen in this one man, at the same time, the extremes of a savage cruelty, and a generosity, that does honour to human nature.

“Religion, too, seemed to have a great influence on his mind from policy, or from better motives; but his religion was displayed in the regularity with which he performed its duties, not in the submission he showed to its ministers, which was never more than what good government required. Yet his choice of a counsellor and favourite was, not according to the mode of the time, out of that order, and a choice that does honour to his memory. This was Lanfranc, a man of great learning for the times, and extraordinary piety. He owed his elevation to William; but, though always inviolably faithful, he never was the tool or flatterer of the power which raised him; and the greater freedom he showed, the higher he rose in the confidence of his master. By mixing with the concerns of state he did not lose his religion and conscience, or make them the covers or instruments of ambition; but tempering the fierce policy of a new power by the mild lights of religion, he became a blessing to the country, in which he was promoted. The English owed to the virtue of this stranger, and the influence he had over the king, the little remains of liberty they continued to enjoy; and at last such a degree of his confidence, as in some sort counterbalanced the severities of the former part of his reign.”

The circumstances that led to the demand, and grant, of Magna Charta from King John, are thus shortly noticed—

“It may not be improper to pause here for a few moments, and to consider a little more minutely the causes, which had produced the grand revolution in favour of liberty, by which this reign was distinguished; and to draw all the circumstances, which led to this remarkable event, into a single point of view.

“Since the death of Edward the Confessor, only two princes succeeded to the crown upon undisputed titles. William the Conqueror established his by force of arms. His successors were obliged to court the people by yielding many of the possessions, and many of the prerogatives of the crown; but they supported a dubious title by a vigorous administration; and recovered by their policy, in the course of their reign, what the necessity of their affairs obliged them to relinquish for the establishment of



their power. Thus was the nation kept continually fluctuating between freedom and servitude. But the principles of freedom were predominant, though the thing itself was not yet fully formed. The continual struggle of the clergy for the ecclesiastical liberties laid open at the same time the natural claims of the people; and the clergy were obliged to show some respect for those claims, in order to add strength to their own party.

“The concessions, which Henry the Second made to the ecclesiastics on the death of Becket, which were afterwards confirmed by Richard the First, gave a grievous blow to the authority of the crown; as thereby an order of so much power and influence triumphed over it in many essential points. The latter of these princes brought it very low by the whole tenour of his conduct. Always abroad, the royal authority was felt in its full vigour without being supported by the dignity, or softened by the graciousness of the royal presence. Always in war, he considered his dominions only as a resource for his armies. The demerits of the crown were squandered: every office in the state was made vile by being sold. Excessive grants, followed by violent and arbitrary resumptions, tore to pieces the whole contexture of the government. The civil tumults, which arose in that king’s absence, showed, that the king’s lieutenants at least might be disobeyed with impunity.

“Then came John to the crown. The arbitrary taxes, which he imposed very early in his reign, which offended even more by the improper use made of them than their irregularity, irritated the people extremely, and joined with all the preceding causes to make his government contemptible. Henry the Second, during his contest with the church, had the address to preserve the barons in his interests. Afterwards, when the barons had joined in the rebellion of his children, this wise prince found means to secure the bishops and ecclesiastics. But John drew upon himself at once the hatred of all orders of his subjects. His struggle with the Pope weakened him; his submission to the Pope weakened him yet more. The loss of his foreign territories besides what he lost along with them in reputation, made him entirely dependent on England; whereas his predecessors made one part of their territories subservient to the preservation of their authority in another, where it was endangered. Add to all these causes the personal character of the king, in which there was nothing uniform or sincere, and which introduced the like unsteadiness into all his government. He was indolent, yet restless in his disposition; fond of working by violent methods, without any vigour; boastful, but continually betraying his fears; showing, on all occasions, such a desire of peace as hindered him from ever enjoying it. Having no spirit of order, he never looked forward; content by any temporary expedient to extricate himself from a present difficulty. Rash, arrogant, perfidious, irreligious,

unquiet, he made a tolerable head of a party, but a bad king ; and had talents fit to disturb another's government, not to support his own.

“A most striking contrast presents itself between the conduct and fortune of John, and his adversary Philip. Philip came to the crown when many of the provinces of France, by being in the hands of two powerful vassals, were in a manner dismembered from the kingdom ; the royal authority was very low in what remained. He re-united to the crown a country as valuable as what belonged to it before ; he reduced his subjects of all orders to a stricter obedience than they had given to his predecessors. He withstood the papal usurpation, and yet used it as an instrument in his designs ; whilst John, who inherited a great territory, and an entire prerogative, by his vices and weakness gave up his independency to the Pope, his prerogative to his subjects, and a large part of his dominions to the King of France.”

About this time English literature and English history became indebted to Mr. Burke in no ordinary degree by the establishment, in conjunction with Dodsley, of the *Annual Register*. Of the excellence and utility of this work, the plan of which was ingenious, while the execution insured great and unfading popularity, there never has been but one opinion. Several of the first volumes passed to a fifth and sixth edition. It is the best, and the most comprehensive of all the periodical works, without any admixture of their trash, or their frequent tediousness of detail ; many of the sketches of contemporary history, written from his immediate dictation for about thirty years, are not merely valuable as coming from such a pen, but masterly in themselves ; and in the estimation of some of the chief writers of our day, are not likely to be improved by any future historian. They form, in fact, the chief sources whence all the principal histories of the last sixty years have been, and must continue to be, compiled, besides furnishing a variety of other useful and illustrative matter. The *Annual Register* for 1758, the first of the series, came out in June of the following year. Latterly a Mr. Ireland wrote much of it under Mr. Burke's immediate direction.

This work also he never thought proper to claim. The fact of his participation in it has been always matter of doubt, though, from an attentive examination of circumstances minute in themselves connected with this work, added to the modesty with which he speaks of himself at all times, and even the suppression of his name on important occasions, when some extraordinary compliments were paid him, both in and out of the House of Commons, the present writer was satisfied of the affirmative, even before he received more positive information. The sum allowed for it by Dodsley was only £100 ; several of the receipts for the copy-money, in his own hand-writing, are still extant ; the

two following, for the year 1761, as being at hand, are given for the satisfaction of the reader : \*

“Received from Mr. Dodsley the sum of £50 on account of the Annual Register of 1761, this 28th March, 1761.

“EDM. BURKE.”

“Received from Messrs. R. and T. Dodsley, the sum of £50 sterling, being in full for the Annual Register of 1761, this 30th day of March, 1762.

“EDM. BURKE.”

Trifling causes are tritely said to be sometimes productive of important effects; and the composition of the Annual Register may have tended to influence the future career and fame of its author. By the investigations necessary for the historical article he became acquainted with the workings of practical politics, the secret springs by which they were put in motion, and with some of the chief actors concerned. A careful writer of contemporary history for a series of years, cannot avoid almost, if he would, minutely scanning the political features of his own country and of Europe. He who has to speak during the session, and meditate during the recess—who acts on the great theatre of politics one half the year, and who must combine, analyze, and ponder upon the proceedings in order to write upon them, during the other, may not ultimately become a wise or great statesman; but there is no doubt that he goes the most effectual way towards it. To Mr. Burke it imparted knowledge and experience almost without the trouble of the search.

For his uncle, Mr. Nagle, of Moneamyny, in Ireland, he preserved a particular affection, on account of the kindness experienced from him since childhood, and from being a friendly intercessor with his father, whenever the latter felt displeased at what he considered the inactivity (as far as an active profession was concerned) of his son. To this gentleman he wrote frequently; and some of the letters being preserved, give us proofs of an amiable and grateful disposition, written as they were, in the full confidence of never being seen out of the family circle:—†

“Dear Sir,

“Cousin Will Burke left yesterday. He made our little set very happy by his company, and by the account he gave of all our friends on the Blackwater. He said that you were so good to express some desire of hearing from us; I am too much

\* The originals, written on narrow slips of (of course) *unstamped* paper, are in the possession of William Upcott, Esq. of the London Institution, to whom I am indebted for a perusal of them.

† This has been published recently in that popular work the *New Monthly Magazine*.

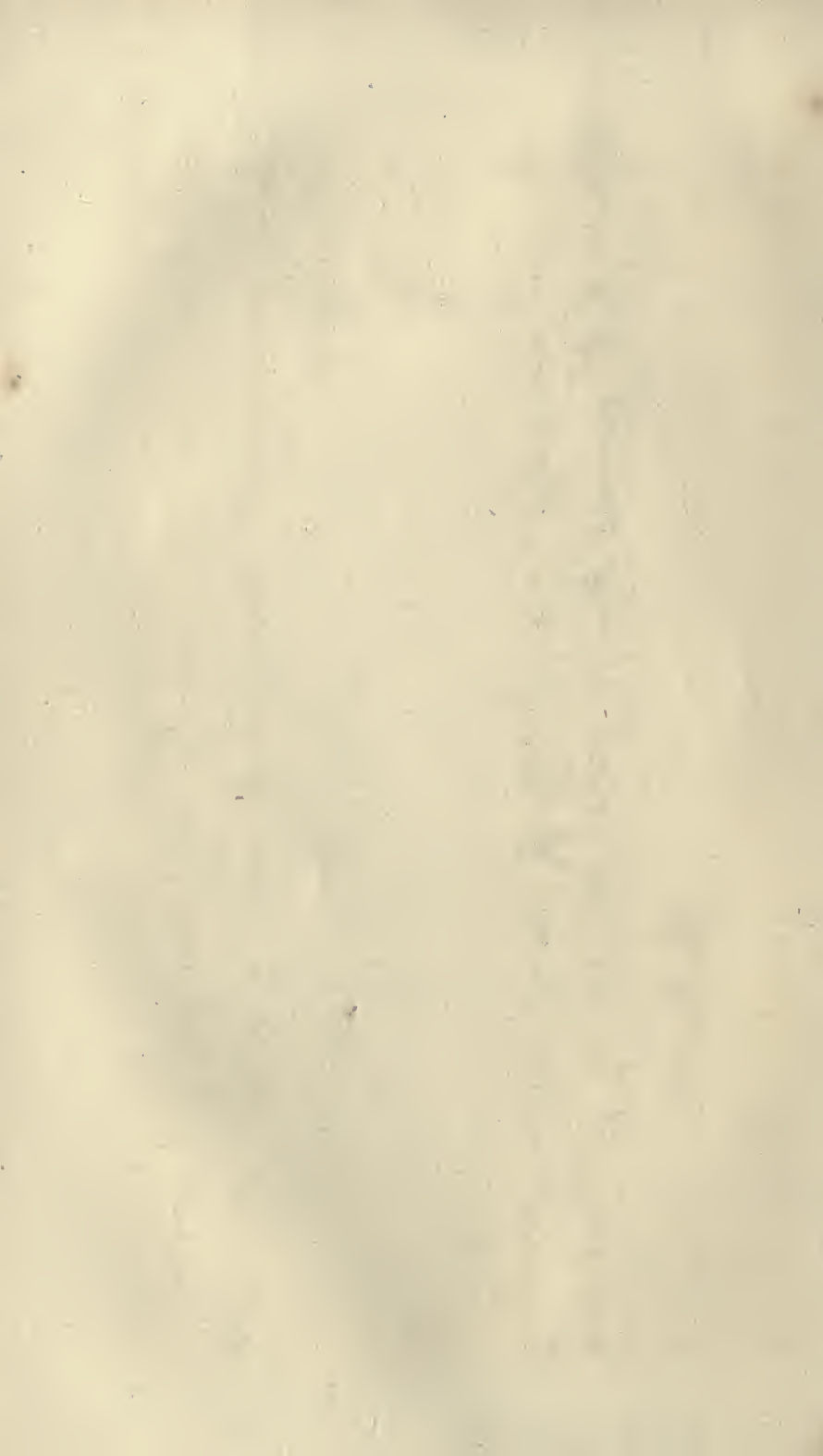


Received from W. W. Dodsley the sum of fifty pounds  
on account of the Annual Reports of 1761. this 28<sup>th</sup>  
March 1761

Ed. Burke.

Received from Wm. D. R. & J. Dodsley the sum of fifty pounds the day  
in full for the annual Reports of 1761 this 30 day of March. 1762

Ed. Burke.



pleased with the intelligence to inquire very closely into it, but gladly lay hold of the first opportunity of assuring you how heartily I am rejoiced to find I have still some place in your remembrance; I am sure I should entertain a very bad opinion of my own memory, and a much worse of my heart, if I was capable of forgetting the many obligations I owe you. There are very few persons in the world for whom I have so great a respect, or whose good opinion I should be more glad to have than yours. When I had resolved to write to you, I was at a loss to know how I should make my letters worth the trouble I must give you in sending for them (for you must know I intend to trouble you in that way very often); but I recollected that some of our London newspapers might prove no disagreeable entertainment to you, and that by this means you would receive some accounts earlier than the Dublin papers can give them. I therefore inclose with this what I think one of our best and most entertaining news-letters, as it not only contains as much of all foreign transactions as any of the others, but often such remarks upon them as may serve to explain many public affairs, or at least show something of the general conversation here concerning them. It contains besides some accounts of the new books from time to time published. I should have done this some days ago, but I waited to get in such a stock of franks as to enable me to continue to send you the papers without interruption.

“In the beginning of my letter I made mention of Will Burke’s having begun his journey; but lest his family should hear of it, and expecting to see him soon, may be uneasy if they find him delayed longer than the journey requires, it is proper to let you know that he may probably be obliged to wait some days in Chester for the arrival of Hugh Massey. By the little I have seen of that gentleman, he seems to have a great deal of good nature. He is to go to Ireland in company with my Lord Carberry, and will labour, and I hope with success, to extricate cousin Garret from the troublesome situation which I am heartily sorry to find he is in.

“I could employ what remains of my paper, and with great satisfaction to myself, in desiring my best remembrance to my friends with you and about you; but they are so many, and my good wishes for them all so hearty, that I should find it much easier to fill my paper than to satisfy myself. I must therefore trust to theirs and your good nature to represent what I must still be defective in if I had said a great deal more. Mrs. Burke has not the pleasure of being known to you, but she joins me in the sincerest regards for you all; she desires in particular to be remembered to her sister Peggy, of whom she has heard many things that pleased her very much, from Mrs. Burke; my love to her. My brother is in the city\* at a great distance from

\* The first views of Richard Burke were directed to commerce.



us, or he would gladly join us in the same sentiments to you, and to her, and to all our friends.

“ I am, my dear Uncle,  
“ Your very affectionate humble servant,  
“ EDM. BURKE.

“ London, Wimple (Wimpole) Street,  
Cavendish Square, April 17, 1759.”

An intimacy between him and the eminent Samuel Johnson had commenced some time previous to this, at the table of Garrick. On Christmas-day, 1758, Mr. Murphy dined with them, and was surprised to find the lexicographer submit to contradiction, India being the subject of discussion, from his companion twenty years younger than himself, which he would tolerate in no other person, whatever their talents or experience. A mutual admiration seemed to be the first feeling between them, which nothing afterward served to diminish; surviving occasional sharp contentions for victory in conversation, the clashing of opposite political attachments and opinions, the almost irreconcilable feuds occasioned even among friends by the American contest, and the devoted adherence of the orator to that party which the other in his strong manner denominated “ Whig dogs.”

Nothing contributed more to this esteem than Burke's faculty to excel in what his friend so eminently practised himself and loved in others, “ good talk.” The conversation of the former, if less striking than that of Johnson, was more conciliating; if less pungent, perhaps quite as entertaining; and in general society much more acceptable, because less overbearing.

He communicated to his hearers scarcely less information without leaving behind it the sting of bitter sarcasm, or rude contempt, to rankle in the breast of a defeated antagonist. His manners were at the same time unassuming, distinguished more for suavity than that variety and vivacity which are too often the results of studied efforts at display.

No great man ever praised another more than Johnson praised Burke. Remarking in conversation that the fame of men was generally exaggerated in the world, somebody quoted Burke as an exception, and he instantly admitted it—“ Yes; Burke is an extraordinary man; his stream of mind is perpetual.” “ Burke's talk,” said he at another time, “ is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full.” An argumentative contest with him, he seemed to think required such exertion of his own mind, that when unwell at one time, and Burke's name was mentioned, he observed, “ That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me.” “ Burke,” added he again, “ is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he has in the world. Take up whatever topic you

please, he is ready to meet you." Often did he repeat, "That no man of sense could meet Mr. Burke by accident under a gateway, to avoid a shower, without being convinced that he was the first man in England."

"Burke, Sir," said he at another time, "is such a man, that if you met him for the first time in the street where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside for shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk to you in such a manner that when you parted you would say—this is an extraordinary man. Now you may be long enough with me without finding any thing extraordinary." He allowed him to be a man of consummate and unrivalled abilities, very early in his parliamentary career; "with vast variety of knowledge, store of imagery, and copiousness of language." A frequent question to Mr. Murphy was, "Are you not proud of your countryman?" adding occasionally, "*Cum talis sit utinam noster esset!*" Of all the triumphs of Mr. Burke, it was perhaps the greatest to compel the admiration and personal love of a man whose mind was at once so capacious and so good, so powerful and so prejudiced, so celebrated and so deserving of celebrity.

What Johnson termed "Burke's affluence of conversation," and which he so highly prized and frequently talked of, often proved, as may be supposed, a source of mingled wonder and admiration to others. Few men of education but were impressed by it, and fewer still who had the opportunity of being in his society frequently, forgot the pleasure they had thus enjoyed. Many years after this period, Mr. Burke and a friend travelling through Litchfield for the first time, stopped to change horses, when being desirous to see more of a place which had given birth to his friend Johnson than a casual glance afforded, they strolled toward the cathedral. One of the canons observing two respectable strangers making inquiries of the attendants, very politely came up to offer such explanations as they desired, when a few minutes only had elapsed before the feeling of superior information on such matters, with which he had met them, became changed to something like amazement at the splendour, depth, and variety of the conversation of one of the strangers. No matter what topic started, whether architecture, antiquities, ecclesiastical history, the revenues, persecutions, or the lives of the early ornaments and leading members of the church; he touched upon them all with the readiness and accuracy of a master. They had not long separated when some friends of the Canon met him hurrying along the street; "I have had," said he, "quite an adventure; I have been conversing for this half hour past with a man of the most extraordinary powers of mind and extent of information, which it has ever been my fortune to meet with, and I am now going to the inn to ascertain if possible who this stranger is." There he learnt that his late companion,

who had just set off, was the celebrated Mr. Burke; he regretted much that he had not known this sooner; and his friends that they had not had an opportunity of knowing or seeing him at all. The circumstance formed an exemplification of Johnson's remark, that wherever met with, he was never to be mistaken for an ordinary man.

In speaking of Burke's social hours, the late Mr. Grattan not long before his death, observed to several friends that he was the greatest man in conversation he had met with. A nobleman who was present (Lord C.) inquired whether he did not think Curran on some occasions greater? "No, my Lord," was the reply—"Curran indeed had much wit; but Burke had wit too, and, in addition to wit, boundless stores of wisdom and knowledge."

The ease with which he introduced a subject, and the subtlety by which it was often carried on, were alluded to by Goldsmith, when he said, in reply to an eulogy on Johnson's powers of conversation, "But is he like Burke, who winds into his subject like a serpent?"

Among the other eminent persons to which the reputation of his philosophical essay and powers of conversation gave a ready introduction, were Dr. Warburton, George Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Fitzherbert, member for Derby, Soame Jenyns, Mr. (afterwards Sir Joshua) Reynolds, Dr. Markham, afterwards Archbishop of York, Pulteney Earl of Bath, and perhaps a more remarkable person than either, Mrs. Anne Pitt, sister of the celebrated minister then at the head of the cabinet. This lady, Mr. Burke used to say, possessed not only great and agreeable talents, but was the most perfectly eloquent person he ever heard speak. He lamented not having committed to paper one particular conversation in which the richness and variety of her discourse quite astonished him. She was accustomed to tell her great brother in their argumentative contests, that he knew nothing but Spenser's Fairy Queen. "And no matter how that was said," added Mr. Burke, in mentioning the circumstance, "but whoever relishes and reads Spenser as he ought to be read, will have a strong hold of the English language."

Of his acquaintance with Warburton, which was but slight, he gave the following account in conversation with Mr. Wilkes, who had commenced a smart attack on the character of the bishop, which Mr. Burke rather defended. "I was in a large private company in which it so happened I did not hear the names of the persons who sat on either side of me. One of them, however, attracted my attention in a very particular manner by the variety and depth of his conversation, carried on in an easy, good-humoured tone, and sometimes he was even amusing. From the latter circumstances—so contrary to what might be supposed from the extreme violence of the controversialist—I



must confess I was for some time in doubt; but at length exclaimed, "Sir, I think I cannot mistake; you must be the celebrated Dr. Warburton; *aut Erasmus aut Diabolus.*" Warburton smiled, and we had much interesting conversation during the remainder of the evening."

To Sir Joshua Reynolds and Wilkes he also related an anecdote of the Bishop, not a little indicative of the vanity and self-importance of that prelate, which had been told him by Blakey, the artist. This gentleman having been employed by Warburton to design the frontispiece to his edition of Pope, received directions to make him (Warburton) the principal and foreground figure in the composition, and the poet only secondary. These orders were of course obeyed, and in the piece the light proceeds upward from Warburton to Pope, in opposition to the usual rules of art. Wilkes wittily observed, "It was not merely on that, but on all occasions, that the bishop and the poet had been looking different ways."

Of Mr. Fitzherbert, a man of a very different stamp, who was nevertheless a great friend to authors and to letters, Dr. Johnson drew the following character: "There was no sparkle, no brilliancy in Fitzherbert; but I never knew a man who was so generally acceptable. He made every body quite easy, overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said. Every body liked him; but he had no friend as I understand the word, nobody with whom he exchanged intimate thoughts. People were willing to think well of every thing about him." One part of this account is certainly not correct; Mr. Burke, the Marquis of Rockingham, and others lived on the most intimate footing with this gentleman; but Johnson's habitual harshness probably deterred him from being so unreserved in conversation with him as he otherwise might.

Hume, whom he first met at the table of Garrick, was another acquaintance; and the historian found his opinions of so much consequence in London, that on the publication of Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, he thought it necessary to present him with a copy, writing his reasons to the author, April 1st, 1759.

"Wedderburn and I made presents of our copies to such of our acquaintance as we thought good judges, and proper to spread the reputation of the book. I sent one to the Duke of Argyle, to Lord Lyttelton, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and Burke, an Irish gentleman, who wrote lately a very pretty treatise on the Sublime." A considerable degree of intimacy arose from this civility. But on religion and politics their sentiments were too diametrically opposite ever to approach to agreement; and a difference of opinion respecting the Irish massacre of 1641 gave

rise to some animated discussions between them; Burke maintaining, from documents existing in Dublin University, that the common accounts of that event were overcharged; Hume, that the statements in his history were correct. With Adam Smith himself, a greater degree of friendship prevailed; his work was termed in the Annual Register of that year "excellent; a dry abstract of which would convey no juster idea of it than the skeleton of a departed beauty would of her form when she was alive." And on subsequently coming to London, this philosopher paid a high compliment to the sound judgment of Mr. Burke as the only man he had met with who thought as he did on the chief topics of political economy,\* without previous communication.

Mr. Burke used often to say to Mr. Fox and others, speaking of Hume in familiar conversation, that in manners he was an easy unaffected man, previous to going to Paris as Secretary to Lord Hertford, the British Ambassador; but that the adulation and caresses of the female wits of that capital had been too powerful even for a *philosopher*; and the result was, he returned a literary coxcomb.

He remarked likewise, that Hume had taken very little trouble with his history, particularly as to the earlier accounts of this island, having examined very few ancient records or writers, his aim being rather to make out a pleasing narrative than to ascertain facts. This, Mr. Burke said, he had discovered in consequence of having in some degree gone over the same ground himself. But in addition to this, Hume himself, being pushed pretty hard in conversation, acknowledged to Boswell on one occasion, that he had not paid much attention to the older historians on controverted points; he had merely dipped into them; for little he thought was to be gained by a minute examination.

The reign of Charles II., Mr. Burke added, was the period on which Hume had bestowed the most labour, he having expressed more than once in conversation, as well as in writing, an unaccountable partiality for that monarch. Many important parts of the history are undoubtedly very superficial; and the discoveries daily making in historical researches are likely to diminish still more his authority with strict inquirers into facts; but after all, it

\* It appears that Mr. Fox, by his own confession to a living writer (C. Butler, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn), never read Adam Smith's great work on the Wealth of Nations: that "there was something in all these subjects which passed his comprehension; something so wide, that he could never embrace them himself, or find any one who did." This account of the science of Political Economy is at variance with all opinions of the best informed men, and in itself certainly inaccurate. It is another proof, however, of what the present writer has advanced in another part of this work, in sketching his character, namely, that he was impatient of study—of mental labour on subjects of abstract inquiry—of profiting as he might have done by the experience and intense meditation of others; consequently, that though always a great man, he did not sufficiently discipline his mind to become a truly wise one.



may be doubted whether he has not done as much as can be expected from a general historian.

The opinion of Mr. Burke, in the argument with Hume, respecting the Irish records, of facts being much misrepresented in all historical notices of that country, as an examination of the original documents would show, is stated with some force in the fragments of his tract on the Popery laws.

He calls the histories of Ireland "miserable performances," and adds—"But there is an interior history of Ireland, *the genuine voice of its records and monuments*, which speaks a very different language from these histories—from Temple and from Clarendon; these restore nature to its just rights, and policy to its proper order. *For they even now show to those who have been at the pains to examine them, and they may show one day to all the world*, that these rebellions were not produced by toleration, but by persecution; that they arose not from just and mild government, but from the most unparalleled oppression. These records will be far from giving the least countenance to a doctrine so repugnant to humanity and good sense, as that the security of any establishment, civil or religious, can ever depend upon the misery of those who live under it, or that its danger can ever arise from their quiet and prosperity."\*

About this time Mr. Burke occasionally resided at Plaistow in Essex. A lady, then about fourteen years old, and residing in that neighbourhood, informs the writer that she perfectly remembers him there; that his brother Richard lived chiefly with him; and that they were much noticed in the neighbourhood for talents and sociable qualities, and particularly for having a variety of visitors who were understood to be authors soliciting a private opinion of their works, and not unfrequently men of rank.

Some of the best books of the time, as Hume and Robertson's Histories, Leland's Philip of Macedon, Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors, and a variety of others, were sent for his perusal, and some were noticed in the Annual Register, though it may be doubted whether his connexion with that work was known. In noticing Johnson's *Rasselas*, in this year, there is an observation of his which has been often repeated since by other critics, as if the writers claimed it for their own. "The instruction which is found in works of this kind, when they convey any instruction at all, is not the predominant part, but arises accidentally in the course of a story planned only to please. But in this novel, the moral is the principal object, and the story is a mere vehicle to convey the instruction."

A letter to his uncle about this time (11th of October, 1759, from Wimpole-street), alludes to his brother Richard's first trip to the West Indies on a mercantile adventure—

\* Burke's Works, vol. ix. p. 393.



“My brother has been beforehand with me in almost every thing I could say. My conduct stands in need of as many apologies as his, but I am afraid our apologies might be almost as troublesome as our neglects. All I can say is, that I have been, I think it is now eleven years, from the county of Cork, yet my remembrance of my friends there is as fresh as if I had left it yesterday. My gratitude for their favours, and my love for their characters, is rather heightened, as the oftener I think of them—and I think of them very often, they must be. This I can say with great truth. Believe me, dear Sir, it would be a great pleasure to me to hear as often from you as it is convenient. Do not give yourself any trouble about franks; I value very little that trifling expense, and I should very little deserve to hear from my friends, if I scrupled to pay a much higher price for that satisfaction. If I had any thing that you could have pleasure in to send you from hence, I should be a punctual correspondent; there is nothing here except what the newspapers contain, that can interest you; but nothing can come from the Blackwater which does not interest me very greatly. Poor Dick is on the point of quitting us; however, he has such advantageous prospects where he is going, that I part from him with the less regret. One of the first merchants here has taken him by the hand and enabled him to go off with a very valuable cargo. He has another advantage and satisfaction in his expedition; one of our best friends here goes at the same time in one of the first places in the island.”

Besides Lord Bath, Lord Lyttelton, and Horace Walpole, Mr. Burke knew several other persons who had been opposed to, or connected with, the administration of Sir Robert Walpole; and from these he derived some information regarding the secret politics of the time, as well as formed a more favourable opinion of that minister than many have been inclined to entertain. In more than one of his pamphlets he speaks of him with respect. In conversation also he used to say, that no minister aimed more sincerely at the real prosperity of the country, or went more wisely to work to secure it, had not the violence of opposition often prevented him from doing as he wished. He did justice to his good humour, his affability, and his sociable qualities, which gained him friends even among his political opponents.

It was Mr. Burke who first told the story, which has been since so often repeated, of Sir Robert, who when he had retired to private life from the fatigues of public business, desired his son to get him a book to read to him. The son asked on what subject?—should it be history? No, said Sir Robert, not history; there can be no truth in that. He admitted philosophical speculations, travels, and Pliny; but from his own experience he was convinced that history could not be true.

Mr. William Burke was also frequently a visitor at Plaistow, who, possessing very considerable talents, literary and political,

and united in the strictest friendship with Edmund and Richard from boyhood, was said to be associated with them in some of their writings.

On the publication in 1760 of Lord Bath's letter to two great men, meaning Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle, on the propriety of retaining Canada in preference to any acquisitions in the West Indies, in the proposed conditions of peace, this gentleman wrote a reply, strongly recommending the retention of Guadeloupe and other islands; to which Dr. Franklin thought it necessary to write a rejoinder, supporting the opinion of Lord Bath.\* Another pamphlet, said to have been corrected by Edmund, came from the pen of William Burke, in 1761, on the failure of the negotiation with M. Bussy, entitled, "An Examination of the Commercial Principles of the late Negotiation." Some further notices of this gentleman will occur hereafter; it may be remarked, however, that he and Richard Burke wrote much on political topics in the newspapers and other periodical works at this time, and for nearly twenty years afterwards, which has been improperly attributed to Edmund, who from being in parliament, found sufficient employment in pursuing nobler game.

A letter to Agmondisham Vesey, Esq., an old college acquaintance, dated from Sunning Hill, Sept. 10, 1760, and addressed to his friend at Lucan, alludes to one of those momentary fits of displeasure sometimes felt by his father from the cause already mentioned—

"I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for your kind and successful endeavours in my favour; of whatever advantage the remittance was, the assurance you give me of my father's reconciliation was a great deal more pleasing, and both indeed were rendered infinitely more agreeable to me by passing through your hands. I am sensible how very much I am indebted to your good nature upon this occasion. If one has but little merit, it is some consolation to have partial friends. Lord Lyttelton has been at Hagley for this month past, or near the matter; where for the first time he receives his friends in his new house. He was so obliging to invite me; I need not say that I am much concerned to find I shall not be able to obey his Lordship's commands, and that I must lose for this year at least the sight of that agreeable place, and the conversation of its agreeable owner. Mrs. Montagu† is, I believe, at Tunbridge, for she told me on her leaving town, that she intended to make a pretty long stay there. May I flatter myself with the hope of seeing you this winter in London?"

\* The opinion of the Burkes, after all, was the most just. America with such a neighbour would have become more dependant on England. M. de Vergennes used to mention it as one of the greatest political errors that had ever been committed.

*Butler's Reminiscences*, p. 156.

† Well known for her literary parties in London, and for an "Essay on Shakespeare."

I cannot so easily forget the evenings I have passed not to be most desirous of renewing them."

Mr. Burke, in addition to his literary labours, was now waiting for an opportunity to push his way in the political world, to compensate for the advantages of the profession which he had deserted. He was not, however, as has been untruly said, either living in obscurity, or in distress, but, on the contrary, associating as we see, with some of the highest and most estimable characters in the country, though himself in a private station. He occupied a house first in Wimpole Street and then in Queen Anne Street, near to Mr. Fitzherbert's; his father-in-law, Dr. Nugent, who had removed to London, lived with him, and continued to do so for the seven following years, until his removal to Beaconsfield, forming an example of a most united and happy family.

His predilections during this time were undoubtedly political; much of his studies and writings tended to this point; the society with which he mixed served to confirm it; and the possession of an able pen, a clear head, and a latent confidence in his own powers, increased a prepossession which promised the readiest avenue to fame and power. A slender opening into public life at length seemed to offer.

Among the warmest admirers of his talents was the amiable and patriotic Lord Charlemont; a peer without undue pride, a man of fashion without foppery, a good scholar though never at a public school or university, a voluminous writer without courting the honours of the press, and a patriot with little of the leaven of faction. Born to a title and competent fortune, he laid his country under no contribution for his services, and on most occasions gave his vote to the ministry or to the opposition, as the public interest seemed to require. He lived chiefly in Ireland, not as a matter of preference, but from a sense of duty to the country whence he derived his birth, his title, and his income. He wielded many years after this time a tremendous military engine, the Irish volunteers, at a moment of strong national excitement and difficulty, in a manner the most prudent and able. A patron and friend of literature, he sought and valued the society of its most eminent professors. No man was more popular in his own country, or seemed better to approach the model of what a nobleman should be in all countries.

Mr. Burke said many years afterwards, "Lord Charlemont is a man of such polished manners, of a mind so truly adorned, and disposed to the adoption of whatever is excellent and praiseworthy, that to see and converse with him would alone induce me, or might induce any one who relished such qualities, to pay a visit to Dublin."

His weaknesses were few, and would not be worth enumerating, had not some of them led, almost in the last stage of life, to an interruption of correspondence with his then celebrated friend.



He thought, it seems, that public virtue centred chiefly in the Whigs: he had too strong a jealousy of his Roman Catholic fellow-subjects and countrymen; he considered the revolution in France as the dawn of rational liberty; he leaned to the question of parliamentary reform in Ireland, at a moment when he saw and acknowledged that its chief supporters entertained, as the subsequent rebellion proved, more dangerous designs; and he was too much of an Irishman to look on the contemplated union with England otherwise than as the ruin of his country.

By this distinguished character Mr. Burke was introduced in 1759 to another of not less notoriety. This was Mr. William Gerard (commonly called Single-speech) Hamilton, a gentleman who, after a few able efforts in the House of Commons, gained more celebrity by afterwards keeping his tongue still, than many others by the most determined volubility.

The son of a lawyer, grounded in the same profession himself, and bred at Oriel College, Oxford, he, in May, 1754, transplanted himself from Lincoln's Inn to the House of Commons as member for Petersfield. A brilliant speech eighteen months afterwards, followed by one or two others of less interest, made him a lord of trade in 1756, of which board Lord Halifax was then president. With this nobleman, created lord-lieutenant of Ireland, he proceeded thither in 1761 as chief secretary, shone off vividly on two or three occasions, returned to England in about three years, and, though a senator for the remainder of his life, above thirty years, his lips within the house were ever after, hermetically sealed to public discussion. While he declined, however, to give the country his advice, he did not hesitate to take its money, having enjoyed the sinecure of Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer from 1763 to 1784, when it was resigned, though not without an equivalent, to Mr. Foster.

His talents were reckoned of the first class, his understanding clear, his judgment sound, particularly, as his friends said, on the first view of a question before his ingenuity had time to fritter it away in useless subtleties and refinements, to which he was prone; his wit pointed, his oratory epigrammatic and antithetical, his conversation easy and agreeable. In composition he was laboriously affected, being a literary fop of the most determined cast: for a stop omitted, a sentence not fully turned, or a word that upon reflection could be amended, were sufficient to occasion the recal of a note to a familiar acquaintance. What he uttered in public partook of the same labour. He was perhaps the only member of either house who ever wrote, got by heart, and rehearsed his speeches in private, previous to their delivery in the House of Commons. One of these, three hours in length, Lord Charlemont knew to have been repeated three times before a friend.

He possessed, however, a very useful faculty,—a clear insight

into character, which, after the first introduction, made him cultivate the acquaintance of Mr. Burke, with a desire of attaching him to his own service. The appointment to Ireland opportunely offered for this purpose; it was settled that he should accompany him, partly as a friend, partly in the situation of private secretary, in which, as being perfectly conversant with the local interests, parties, and public characters of the country, his services promised to be of the highest value.

Another account of the origin of his connexion with Lord Halifax's Irish administration has circulated pretty generally. It is stated, that having obtained a recommendation to the Earl of Bath, considered then as a patron of literature, his lordship received him with much politeness, but lamented his inability to do any thing in the way of advancing his interests, from his little connexion with those in power. After some consideration, however, the peer is reported to have added, that he would give him a letter to Lord Bute, though from their little connexion with each other, not quite satisfied in his own mind of the propriety of taking such a liberty with that nobleman.

To Lord Bute, Mr. Burke is represented to have hastened, when he received from him a nearly similar answer, namely, that he regretted not being enabled to do any thing for him, having resigned his official employments under His Majesty that very morning; but being satisfied Mr. Burke was a man of great genius and acquirements, he would give him a letter to Lord Halifax, then on the point of setting out to assume the Viceroyalty of Ireland, who would doubtless take care to provide for a man of merit.

Lord Halifax was in turn solicited, and in turn, like his brother peers, he could do nothing—all the departments were unluckily filled up:—one vacancy indeed remained, that of secretary to Mr. Hamilton, the public secretary, which, if it suited Mr. Burke, might probably be procured; and this appointment finally was given and accepted.

So far report. Truth and error, however, are so jumbled in the story as to occasion some difficulty in detaching the one from the other; for though some of the circumstances are in themselves true, they are, in the connexion in which they stand here, certainly not true. For instance, it is true that at this time Mr. Burke knew Lord Bath, Lord Halifax, and probably Lord Bute, and might have been recommended to them in the earlier part of his career, as he subsequently was to the Marquis of Rockingham. But nobody intimately acquainted with Mr. Burke's spirit or character, can for a moment believe he would submit to be bandied about from one nobleman to another in the manner here stated, begging for a place. There is besides a glaring anachronism which destroys the credit of the whole. Lord Halifax became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1761, Lord Bute did not resign his employ-

ments until the 8th April, 1763, so that the former peer, instead of being on the point of proceeding to his government as Lord Bute is made to say, had in fact returned, or was just about to return, from it. If no other proof were at hand, however, the statement of Lord Charlemont that he introduced Burke to Hamilton, would be sufficient evidence of the fact.

In March, 1761, the appointments of Lord Halifax and his friends were arranged, though the chief persons did not reach the seat of government until the ensuing October. His Lordship displayed so much skill in his administration, as to disarm and neutralize to any purposes of discord, the contending factions by which that country was then, and has been since, often kept in a flame. What share Mr. Burke had in giving private advice, cannot now be known. He himself, it will be seen, speaks of "a long and laborious attendance;" but whatever his suggestions might have been, Hamilton, as his chief, would naturally take the credit of them to himself.

It has been suggested to the writer from very high political authority intimately conversant with the politics and private history of Ireland at this period, that the principal employment of Mr. Burke was, as deputy to Hamilton, to manage the Irish House of Commons; and for this belief there is some ground in the friendship shown him by Primate Stone, then one of the most active "Undertakers," as they were termed, for ruling that country; and from an expression in a letter written at this time, or shortly afterwards, and still in existence, by a man in power in Dublin, which, in allusion to Mr. Burke's activity, coarsely and untruly calls him "Hamilton's jackal."

No doubt whatever exists, that his services were put in requisition on all the chief measures brought forward or recommended by government. Of one of these he is believed to have been the author, in conjunction with Lord Kenmare; namely, the project for raising, during a period of great distress almost amounting to famine, among the peasantry of the west of Ireland, six regiments of Roman Catholics officered by persons of the same persuasion, for the service of Portugal, which, however, failed through the adverse influence of the great landed proprietors in that quarter of the country. One of his literary productions, or rather state-papers, which at a late period of life was acknowledged either by himself or by Hamilton, it is not clearly remembered which, was the reply of Lord Halifax to the Irish parliament, refusing an augmentation, voted almost unanimously, 26th Feb. 1762, of 4000*l.* per annum to his salary. Of the consideration which he enjoyed, and the esteem which his talents commanded, no better proof need be afforded than the intimate friendships now formed, or renewed, with Mr. Henry Flood, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Monk Mason, Mr. Pery, afterward Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, and ultimately created a peer, besides the



friendship of the Primate and others, men of leading talents and influence in both Houses of Parliament.

The opportunity afforded by this trip of renewing literary, as well as political connexions, which had been interrupted by his stay in England, was not neglected. With Dr. Thomas Wilson, Senior Fellow of the University, Dr. Blundell, Dr. M'Kearney, and others, formerly the directors or partners of his studies, it is recorded that he spent an evening or two every week, conversing chiefly on topics connected with letters. Discussing the merits of the Latin historians one evening, the former gentleman is said to have proposed to join him in translating Livy, but this, Mr. Burke, who probably found he had quite business enough on his hands in the bustle of politics and his other literary occupations, declined. "Good translators," he said, "of Latin authors were rare; and yet, unlike most other rarities, they were not valued as they deserved."

To the south of Ireland, particularly Cork, and its vicinity, he made several excursions in company with his brother, Mr. Garrett Burke; neither were their old and esteemed friends at Ballitore forgotten. Mr. and Mrs. Shackleton in return, calling at his apartments at Dublin Castle, surprised him on the carpet busily occupied in romping with his two boys, and used to mention the affectionate interest he took in their infantile amusements as a proof of an amiable mind, joined to what the world knew to be a great mind.

Even to a late period of life he delighted in children, amusing himself with what he called "his men in miniature," frequently participating in their juvenile sports, and, while playing with them, perhaps at the same moment instructing their grand-fathers, by turning from one to the other to throw out some forcible truth upon human nature, from the scene which their little habits, passions, and contentions afforded. It was no unfrequent thing to see Mr. Burke spinning a top or a tee-totum with the boys who occasionally visited him at Beaconsfield; and the following is an instance of a similar playful and amiable spirit.

A gentleman well known in the literary and political world, who when young amused himself by taking long walks in the vicinity of London, once directed his steps to Harrow, about the time of the coalition ministry, when on a green in front of a small cottage, he espied an assemblage of such men as are rarely seen together; Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan (the owner of the cottage), Lord John Townshend, Lord William Russel, and four or five others the most eminent of the Whig party, diverting themselves after what was then customary, an early dinner. Mr. Burke's employment was the most conspicuous; it was in rapidly wheeling a boy (the late Mr. Thomas Sheridan) round the sward in a child's hand-chaise, with an alertness and vivacity that indicated an almost equal enjoyment in

the sport with his young companion, who in fact was so much pleased with his adult play-fellow, that he would not let him desist, nor did the orator seem much to desire it, till a summons to horse announced the separation of the party.

In the intervals of business in Dublin, he occasionally visited England on matters connected with his literary pursuits, which were not neglected. In March, 1763, when in Queen Anne Street, he received the reward of his services in his native country in a pension of £300 per annum, on the Irish establishment, through the interest, as he said, in writing to a friend in Ireland shortly after, "of Mr. Hamilton and my Lord Primate."

A curious error occurred in the grant of this pension, as appears by the following extract of a letter from Mr. Secretary Hamilton to Sir Robert Wilmot, dated April 14, 1763, for which, and some other documents, I am indebted to a gentleman of high political and official rank and admired talents.—

"There is a mistake in one of the pensions which I desire may be rectified at any hazard, as I was the occasion of it. It is not William Birt who is to have a pension of £300 per annum upon the Primate's list, but Edmund Burke."

This boon, commencing thus somewhat inauspiciously, was to all appearance as inauspiciously terminated; having been enjoyed just for twelve months only, when from the unreasonable and derogatory claims made upon his gratitude, it was thrown up with indignation. The particulars as related by himself shortly after the transaction in a letter to Mr. Flood, have only lately transpired, and they are too honourable to the writer and too interesting to the reader to be given in other than his own words; they exhibit with what indifference a high and manly spirit relinquished a pecuniary favour, granted to him unconditionally, when its continued acceptance could be construed, however illiberally, and without the least anticipation of such a demand, into an obligation to future servitude—

"My dear Flood,

"I thank you for your kind and most obliging letters; you are a person whose good offices are not snares, and to whom one may venture to be obliged without danger to his honour. As I depend upon your sincerity, so I shall most certainly call upon your friendship, if I should have any thing to do in Ireland; this, however, is not the case at present, at least in any way in which your interposition may be employed with a proper attention to yourself; a point which I shall always very tenderly consider in any application I make to my friends.

"It is very true that there is an eternal rupture between me and Hamilton, which was on my side neither sought nor provoked; for though his conduct in public affairs has been for a long time directly contrary to my opinions, very reproachful to

himself, and extremely disgustful to me ; and though in private he has not justly fulfilled one of his engagements to me, yet I was so uneasy and awkward at coming to a breach, where I had once a close and intimate friendship, that I continued with a kind of desperate fidelity to adhere to his cause and person ; and when I found him greatly disposed to quarrel with me, I used such submissive measures as I never before could prevail upon myself to use to any man.

“The occasion of our difference was not any act whatsoever on my part ; it was entirely on his, by a voluntary but most insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving me at any time a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring with tranquillity. This was really and truly the substance of his demand upon me, to which I need not tell you I refused with some degree of indignation to submit. On this we ceased to see each other, or to correspond a good while before you left London. He then commenced, through the intervention of others, a negociation with me, in which he showed as much of meanness in his proposals as he had done of arrogance in his demands ; but as all these proposals were vitiated by the taint of that servitude with which they were all mixed, his negociation came to nothing.

“He grounded these monstrous claims (such as never were before heard of in this country) on that pension which he had procured for me through Colonel Cunninghame, the late Primate, and Lord Halifax, for, through all that series of persons, this paltry business was contrived to pass. Now, though I was sensible that I owed this pension to the good will of the Primate in a great degree, and though, if it had come from Hamilton’s pocket, instead of being derived from the Irish treasury, I had earned it by a long and laborious attendance, and might, in any other than that unfortunate connexion, have got a much better thing ; yet to get rid of him completely, and not to carry a memorial of such a person about me, I offered to transmit it to his attorney in trust for him. This offer he thought proper to accept. I beg pardon, my dear Flood, for troubling you so long on a subject which ought not to employ a moment of your thoughts, and never shall again employ a moment of mine.”

It is difficult to read this without experiencing mingled feelings of admiration and contempt ; of admiration for the honest independence of principle of one man, contrasted with the unusual degree of tyranny and meanness exhibited by another. For whether Hamilton wished to give the pension to another, or to exact it from his friend in order to gratify a pitiful resentment, or to bring him to his own terms by distressing him at a time when such a supply could ill be



dispensed with, the transaction is extremely discreditable to his memory. An intimate friend of his, the late Mr. Malone, who has written a short sketch of his life, appears to have thought so, for he makes no allusion whatever to the connexion with Burke.

This quarrel excited considerable notice among the people in power in Dublin, as appears by the following extract of a letter from Mr. Secretary Waite to Sir Robert Wilmot, written above a year afterwards, and for which the writer is indebted to the kindness of the same gentleman already alluded to, whose opportunities and success in research have been highly instructive to the public.

“Dublin Castle, 9th May, 1765.

“We are told here that Mr. Secretary Hamilton and *his genius* Mr. Bourke have quarrelled to such a degree that Mr. Bourke has actually given up his pension of £300 per annum rather than continue obliged to him, and that it is assigned over to a Mr. Jephson, who lives with Mr. Hamilton. Is this true?”

The report that Captain Jephson, afterwards author of the tragedy of Braganza and other works, was his successor in the pension, might have been true, at least for a time; for it appears by the following document that the money was paid for eighteen months afterwards, though not to Mr. Burke. It will be observed also, that it did not cease till after he was connected with office; either from Mr. Hamilton thinking he could no longer retain it with decency under the eye of the person to whom it was properly due, or from Mr. Burke procuring the Marquis of Rockingham peremptorily to strike it out of the list—

“Vice Treasurer’s Office, Dublin, 25th Aug. 1824.

“The books of this department have been minutely examined, and it appears that by the king’s letter, dated 19th April, 1763, there was granted to Edmund Burke, Esq. during pleasure, a pension of £300 a year from 25th March, 1763, which he assigned on the 10th April, 1764, to Matthew Colthurst\* of Chancery-lane, county of Middlesex. No other assignment appears, nor do any grounds for granting even appear in his Majesty’s letters.

“On the 16th December, 1765, it ceased, pursuant to his Majesty’s letter of that date, and Lord Lieutenant’s warrant thereon, dated 13th January, 1766.”

The conduct of Mr. Burke in this transaction must be considered very magnanimous by carrying the point of honour, or, as he emphatically termed it, “desperate fidelity,” so far, that the story, though so well calculated to tell to his own advantage,

\* Mr. Hamilton’s attorney.

never till recently found its way to the public ear, and this only, it appears, by the letter accidentally being rescued from the flames by one of the executors of the late Mr. Flood, among whose papers it was found. Yet even this honourable reserve was tortured into a handle for party misrepresentation; for it has been eagerly circulated, and with the same perseverance as other equally unfounded rumours, that this very pension, thus surrendered from the most upright motives, was sold by him for a sum of money to pay his debts; adding to the tale, by the same ingenious perversion of fact, that it was not surprising he had deserted his last friends, because he had deserted his first! Other rumours in the same spirit, and quite as true, were circulated respecting their union and separation, which, were they not sometimes copied into popular books where they may possibly deceive, would be beneath notice.

It has been stated, for instance, that Burke wrote Hamilton's speeches; and the fact of the latter remaining tongue-tied for so many years, in the presence of his old associate, and then professed opponent in politics, gave some countenance to the assertion, though quite unfounded in fact. On their quarrel, Hamilton is said to have upbraided him with having taken him from a garret; when the reply is reported to have been, "Then, Sir, by your own confession it was I that *descended* to you." Some apology is necessary to the reader, for repeating this silly falsehood, told of half a dozen other persons beside; for independent of the utter want of truth in the story or in the reproach, Hamilton had too much of the manners of a gentleman, however deficient in the proper feelings of one, to make such a speech, had the circumstance been true; and Burke too much spirit not to reply, not by a pitiful pun, but by chastising the speaker on the spot.

The fact really was, that no interview took place on the dissolution of their friendship. Along with the inclosure to the attorney alluded to in the letter just quoted, was sent an eloquent valedictory epistle, which Hamilton many years after had the candour to confess, was one of the finest compositions he had ever read, although it is not known that he showed it to his friends. It is also unknown what were the private engagements he forfeited to Mr. Burke, though the latter retained through life a strong sense of having been unjustly and insolently treated by him on that occasion.

The real grounds of this quarrel verify an observation of the late Bishop O'Beirne, who, when a gentleman of some political consideration in Ireland remarked to him, that though he himself had perfect confidence in Burke's strict principle and honour upon all occasions, yet others, who did not know him so well, were less inclined to give him credit for some unexplained parts of his conduct: "Believe me," said the Bishop,

“if there be an obscure point in the life or conduct of Edmund Burke, the moment the explanation arrives, it will be found to redound to his honour.”

The conclusion of Mr. Burke's letter to Mr. Flood, as it exhibits the near view of public affairs which he enjoyed, even at this time, and relates some curious particulars of the ministry, is worthy of preservation—

“To your inquiries concerning some propositions in a certain assembly, of a nature injurious to Ireland, since your departure. I know nothing of that kind, except one attempt made by a Mr. Shiffner, to lessen the number of the ports of entry in Britain and Ireland, allowed for the trade of wool and woollen yarn of the growth of the latter country. This attempt was grounded on the decrease of the import of those commodities from Ireland, which they rashly attributed to the great facility of the illicit transport of wool from Ireland to France, by the indulgence of a number of ports. This idea, founded in an ignorance of the nature of the Irish trade, had weight with some persons, but the decreased import of Irish wool and yarn, being accounted for upon true and rational principles, in a short memorial delivered to Mr. Townshend, he saw at once into it with his usual sagacity; and he has silenced the complaints at least for this session. Nothing else was done or meant that I could discover, though I have not been inattentive; and I am not without good hopes that the menaces in the beginning of the session will end as they began, only in idle and imprudent words. At least there is a strong probability that new men will come in, and not improbably with new ideas.

“At this very instant, the causes productive of such a change are strongly at work. The Regency Bill has shown such want of concert, and want of capacity in the ministers, such an inattention to the honour of the Crown, if not such a design *against* it, such imposition and surprize upon the King, and such a misrepresentation of the disposition of Parliament to the Sovereign, that there is no doubt that there is a fixed resolution to get rid of them all (unless perhaps of Grenville); but principally of the Duke of Bedford; so that you will have much more reason to be surprised to find the ministry standing by the end of next week, than to hear of their entire removal. Nothing but an intractable temper in your friend Pitt can prevent a most admirable and lasting system from being put together, and this crisis will show whether pride\*

\* *Pride*, or some other passion, did, it seems, on this occasion, prevail over *patriotism* in the mind of Mr. Pitt; for though the Duke of Cumberland, by order of the King, waited upon him at Hayes (19th May) the very day after this letter was written, with nearly a *carte blanche* for the formation of a Ministry, he flatly refused. His Majesty was necessarily compelled to keep his then Ministers, who displayed no little presumption, if not arrogance, towards him, in the belief that they could not readily be replaced. This state of things, however, could not long continue; and by Royal command, the Duke two months afterwards brought Lord



or patriotism be predominant in his character; for you may be assured, he has it now in his power to come into the service of his country upon any plan of politics he may choose to dictate, with great and honourable terms to himself and to every friend he has in the world, and with such a strength of power as will be equal to every thing, but absolute despotism over the king and kingdom. A few days will show whether he will take this part, or that of continuing on his back at Hayes talking fustian, excluded from all ministerial and incapable of all parliamentary service. For his gout is worse than ever, but his pride may disable him more than his gout. These matters so fill our imaginations here, that with our mob of 6 or 7000 weavers, who pursue the Ministry, and do not leave them quiet or safe in their own houses, we have little to think of other things.

“ I will send you the new edition of Swift’s posthumous works. I doubt you can hardly read this hand; but it is very late. Mrs. Burke has been ill and recovers but slowly; she desires her respects to you and Lady Frances. Iulus is much obliged to you. Will. Bourke always remembers you with affection, and so does my dear Flood. Your most affectionate humble servant,

“ E. BURKE.

“ 18th May, 1765.

“ Pray remember me to Langrishe, and to Leland and Bowden. Dr. Nugent desires his compliments to you, in the strongest manner; he has conceived a very high esteem for you.”

Previous to this rupture with Hamilton, in the autumn of 1763, and in the spring of 1764, Mr. Burke visited Dublin again, on some expectations held out by the Earl of Northumberland, then Lord Lieutenant; and with Mrs. Burke and his son made a short stay at Ballitore, returning to Queen Anne Street, in June. His brother Richard, several months previous to this, had procured the collectorship of the Grenadas.

It was about this period that a trifling circumstance, occurring in a public exhibition, impressed those who were present and knew him (among whom was the relator of the following anecdote) with a feeling of his humanity and virtue, which on subsequent occasions, in his arduous career, was often recalled to mind, and mentioned to his honour.

“ In the year 1762, one Johnson, an Irishman by birth, exhibited many feats of activity in horsemanship, and was, I believe, the first public performer in that line in and about London. He was an active, clever fellow in his way, and seemed to me to be patronized by Mr. Burke, then said to be a student of the Middle

Rockingham into office. See *Horace Walpole’s Letters to Lord Hertford*, 4to. 1825, p. 223. The early and accurate intelligence which Mr. Burke, though wholly unconnected with public life, gained of these proceedings, proves the nature of the society he lived in.

Temple, and by his friend Mr. Netterville, and Mr. Nugent the merchant; for I was seldom there without seeing this party, amongst whom Richard Burke sometimes appeared.

“The great favourite of the company was a beautiful black horse. Whenever Johnson wanted him, he gave three smacks of his whip, and the docile creature came out of his stable and stood by his side; he then ran about the ring until another sound of the whip brought him again to his master. In one unlucky round he disobeyed, and his master’s whip often sounded in vain. When at length he stopped, Johnson by a violent blow between the ears, felled him to the ground, and the creature lay for some minutes as if expiring. Mr. Burke broke from the circle, and running directly up to Johnson, vehemently exclaimed, ‘You scoundrel! I have a mind to knock you down!’ and he would I believe have done so, if Mr. Netterville had not reached him and interposed. Johnson had then leisure to make what apology he pleased, and thus the matter ended;—but I shall never forget the impression of awe and admiration made upon myself and others by the solemn passion with which Mr. Burke uttered this otherwise coarse reproof. Though the circle was immediately broken, all kept a respectful distance; perhaps this was the first time he had ever produced an effect upon an audience. I must be excused for comparing great things with small; but when I first heard him in the House of Commons pouring out a torrent of indignation against cruelty and corruption, I was reminded, after an interval of many years, of the champion of the poor black horse.”

While in Dublin towards the end of 1763, Edmund received a letter from his old friend Dr. Sleight, of Cork, recommending to his attention a friendless son of genius, who had proceeded thence to the metropolis to exhibit a picture, of which in his native city no sufficient judgment could be formed. This was Barry, the celebrated painter. Mr. Burke saw him frequently, examined and praised his picture, inquired into his views and future prospects, and, desirous to try his powers of mind, broached an argument upon a question of taste rather ingenious than solid, which the other boldly opposed; quoting in support of his opinion, and ignorant as it seems of the real author, a passage from the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*. Mr. Burke affecting to contend that this was a poor performance and no authority, considerable discussion ensued, until at length Barry becoming very angry, his new acquaintance, to appease his indignation, confessed himself to be the writer, when the irritable but enthusiastic painter, springing from his seat, ran and embraced him; and as a more unequivocal proof of admiration for the volume in dispute, produced a copy of it, which he had transcribed with his own hand.

The kindness of Mr. Burke did not stop at mere acquaintance

and advice; for, though possessing but slender means himself, and with quite sufficient claims upon them, he had too much goodness of heart, and too sincere sympathy with unfriended talents, to see them sink into hopeless neglect and poverty without at least giving them a chance for reward. No opportunities for improvement existing in Dublin, he offered the artist a passage to England with Mr. Richard Burke, just then returned from the West Indies, received him at his house in Queen Anne-street, introduced him to the principal artists, and procured employment for him to copy pictures under Athenian Stuart, until a favourable change in his own circumstances enabled him to do still more.

Whenever Parliament was sitting, Mr. Burke was observed to be a frequent attendant in the gallery, storing up those practical observations on public business and debate, soon to be drawn forth for active use. Most of his hours of study, as he frequently said afterwards, were devoted to a minute acquaintance with the principles and workings of the British Constitution. The next object in his eyes was our commerce; these alone, he said, had made us what we were—a free and a great nation; and these he had spared no time, no labour, no sacrifice, thoroughly to understand, and for these alone had well earned his subsequent pension before he put his foot in the House of Commons. It is certain that he was the first who rendered the principles and many of the details of commerce generally intelligible in that assembly. Dr. Johnson was proud to be told a few years afterwards, by an excellent judge of the matter, the “all knowing Jackson,” as he was called, that there was more good sense about trade in the account of his journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, than would be heard for a whole year in Parliament, except from Burke.

In the discussions to which the peace and the proceedings of the Grenville Ministry gave rise, he is said to have taken a considerable share; and some letters which excited considerable notice, under the signature of Anti-Sejanus, were attributed to his pen. This may be doubted, or in fact denied. They might have been Mr. William Burke's; but Edmund, in all the Annual Registers up to the period of his connexion with the Rockingham Administration, preserves a rigid impartiality, strongly reprobating the licentiousness of the press on both sides, and complaining (1764) that “character no longer depended on the tenor of a man's life and actions; it was entirely determined by the party he had taken.”

Previous to this time, it has been said, and never denied, that he had disciplined himself in public speaking at the famous debating society, known by the name of the “Robin Hood.” Such indeed was then the custom among law-students and others intended for public life; and a story is told of the future orator having commonly to encounter an opponent whom nobody else



could overcome; this person, it seems was discovered to be a baker, whom Goldsmith, who had heard him several times speak, once characterized as being "meant by nature for a Lord Chancellor." Mr. Murphy had some faint recollection of the anecdote. Tradesmen form no inconsiderable part of such assemblies; and as unlettered minds often think originally, though crudely, it may not be useless to one better informed, thus to seek exercise for its powers by beating down their errors. A circumstance almost precisely similar occurred to the late celebrated Mr. Curran, when keeping his terms in London, and is related in his memoirs by his son.

A suggestion of Mr. Reynolds to Mr. Burke, between whom a close friendship existed, cemented by admiration of each other's talents and private virtues, gave birth in 1764 to the famous Literary Club, in imitation of the social meetings of the wits of the preceding age. No class of persons, perhaps, require them more than those who, having little to enliven the solitary drudgery of the day, gladly fly to familiar converse in the evening with congenial minds. Here the wise may mix with the wise, not indeed to preach up wisdom, but to forget the follies of others in displaying some of their own. Here also were performed; without venting that undue personal animosity and unmeasured abuse of the criticism of our day, those offices to literature now undertaken by the leading reviews, in settling the claims of new books and authors. Literary enmities were then less general, perhaps, in consequence of men of jarring opinions and principles being brought more frequently together, and who found in the amenities of social intercourse something to soften the asperities of controversy. Authors, at present, associate more with the world and less with each other; but it may be doubted whether they or the public have gained by the exchange.

Among those of the club whom Mr. Burke much esteemed, and whose genius and foibles were alternately sources of admiration and amusement, was Goldsmith. They had entered Trinity College within two months of each other; the former, as related, in April, the latter in June, 1744; and though not then particularly acquainted, remembered each other afterwards as being known in the University for the possession of talents, rather than for exerting them. Occasional meetings at Dodsley's renewed the acquaintance, about 1758; and in the Annual Register for the following year, his *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, is noticed with approbation, as were all his subsequent writings.

With the exception of a little vanity, and a little jealousy, which however from the manner they were shown excited rather laughter than anger, it was difficult to know Goldsmith without liking him, even if the warm regards of Burke, Johnson, and

Reynolds were not alone a sufficient stamp of the sterling value of any man. Humane in disposition, generous to imprudence, careless of his own interests, a chaste and elegant writer who advocated the interests of religion and morals, and who combined with his exhortations as much of practical benevolence as falls to the lot of most men, he was worthy of such friends; at once a rival of their fame and of their virtues. An author by profession, he was characterized by the imprudencies often attendant upon genius. He thought not of the morrow; the "heaviest of metals" was so light in his estimation as to be carelessly parted with, though laboriously earned. He and poverty had been so long acquainted, that even when an opportunity offered for casting her off by the success of his pen, they knew not how to separate. He lived too much in pecuniary difficulties, and he died so.

During the term of his literary life, which comprised no more than sixteen years, he wrote much and always well, but chiefly of that class of productions intended rather as sacrifices to necessity than to inclination. There is enough indeed left behind him for fame, but much less than for our national glory and individual pleasure, every reader of taste desires. His plays are good; his poems, novels, and essays, admirable: his histories, as far as they go, infinitely superior to any others of the same abbreviated description. Some persons, on account of the small number of his original works, have been inclined to attribute to him poverty of genius, forgetting his daily wants and the shortness of his career; but, in fact, no writer of the age displayed more fertility and variety on any subject to which he chose to apply the powers of his mind. And it should also be remembered that he had constantly to write for present bread before he could think of contingent reputation; for, alas! the brain with all its noble and delightful thoughts and aspirations must still seek its support from the more grovelling stomach. He died too, at 46, an age at which Johnson was little more than beginning to become known to the public, and after which that great writer completed several of those works which render him the pride of our nation. Had poor Goldsmith lived to attain an equally venerable term of years, there is no doubt, both from his necessities and thirst for distinction, that the national literature would have been enriched much more than it is, by the labours of his pen.

## CHAPTER IV.

Appointed Private Secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham—Anecdote of the Duke of Newcastle—Mr. Burke's account of the state of Parties and Politics—Success in Parliament—Dismission of the Ministry—Short Account of a short Administration—Visit to Ireland—Anecdotes—His Memory—Gregories—Pamphlet in Reply to Mr. Grenville—Junius—Letters to Barry.

THE moment at length arrived when Mr. Burke gained that opening into public life, which nature and the train of his studies had so eminently qualified him to fill.

Mr. George Grenville's Administration had become unpopular by the proceedings against Mr. Wilkes, by the means resorted to for increasing the revenue, and the supposed secret influence of Lord Bute, when the omission of the Princess Dowager of Wales's name in the Regency Bill then framed on the first paroxysm of that malady which subsequently so much afflicted the king, threw it out, as Mr. Burke, in the letter already quoted, had clearly predicted two months before. Mr. Pitt was then applied to in vain; that imperious, though able minister, scarcely permitting his Majesty to have a voice in the formation of his own councils. The Duke of Cumberland, much esteemed for his good sense and popular deportment, now undertook the formation of a ministry; and, by his express command, and through him, by the direct desire of the King, a division of the Whigs entered into office under the Marquis of Rockingham.

The body, among whom this nobleman now took the lead, though comprising the chief of the aristocracy of the country, presented at this moment, and for several years afterwards, an unstable and heterogeneous compound of repelling particles. It was split into as many sections as a marching regiment on the parade; but having no other principle of a military body, exhibited only the irregular energy, when it showed any energy at all, of an undisciplined mob; a mass of moral quicksilver without any fixed point of adhesion; the cuttings and parings of all opinions, jumbled into a crude, vacillating, unintelligible whiggism; most of the members being, in fact, a kind of neutral-ground men, so wavering, so undecided, so uncertain in their support, as almost to justify the wish of Mr. Burke, that "he hoped to God the race was extinct."

The Marquis, the Duke of Newcastle, and their friends forming the main division of the party, deemed themselves sound Whigs; the Duke of Bedford professed to be a Whig; the Duke of Grafton called himself a Whig; Mr. George Grenville thought himself a Whig; and Mr. Pitt, if he hung aloof from the name of Whig, was so near to it in substance, that none but



himself could distinguish the difference. Each of these had various shades of opinion, and some of their followers, as it proved, no opinions at all; while several, with Charles Townshend, seemed so eager for place, or unsteady in principle, as to be ready, upon the summons, to adopt or surrender any opinions whatever. Statesmen out of office are often in the unlucky predicament of being unable to explain to the satisfaction of the people, their hair's-breadth differences of sentiment with those who are in; and when they happen to succeed, do not always get as much credit as they expect for utility, novelty, or sincerity in their views.

Lord Rockingham, doomed to be a leader of short-lived administrations, commanded general respect for the qualities of his heart and manners. He was not a great man, only perhaps because he already enjoyed the chief of the fruits of political greatness—almost the highest rank and the amplest fortune. But were there an order of statesmen set apart from the general class, distinguished for clear views, unwavering integrity, for a sound understanding and an upright mind, who aimed at no brilliancy, and were superior to all duplicity or trick, even to promote a favourite purpose, he would have stood at the head of the list. His knowledge and acquirements were all substantial. He had much for use, though but little for display. His rank in life enabling him to take an enlarged view of the political horizon, he observed keenly, and expressed himself in public, on most occasions, wisely and temperately. Never touching on the extremes of timidity or rashness, he possessed the useful art of knowing exactly how far to go, on party occasions, and where to stop. Whoever had him for an opponent had an honourable one, whom, if he could not convince, he could scarcely disesteem; and as a minister, none could have more unequivocally at heart the good of his country.

Through the recommendation of several friends, particularly Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Burke received the appointment of private secretary to this nobleman, July 17, 1765, just a week after the latter had been nominated to the head of the Treasury. "The British dominions," says a writer who knew most of the political characters of the time, "did not furnish a more able and fit person for that important and confidential situation; the only man since the days of Cicero who has united the talents of speaking and writing with irresistible force and elegance."

His own account of this event given nine years afterwards, was stated with much modesty. "In the year sixty-five, being in a very private station, far enough from any line of business, and not having the honour of a seat in this house, it was my fortune, unknowing and unknown to the then ministry, by the intervention of a common friend, to become connected with a very noble person, and at the head of the Treasury department.

It was indeed in a situation of little rank and no consequence, suitable to the mediocrity of my talents and pretensions. But a situation near enough to enable me to see, as well as others, what was going on; and I did see in that noble person such sound principles, such an enlargement of mind, such clear and sagacious sense, and such unshaken fortitude, as have bound me, as well as others much better than me, by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward."

By those who knew him intimately he was undoubtedly deemed a great acquisition to the ministry; he, however, had not the same high opinion of his situation, having afterwards said, that of all the members of the party at that time, he had the least sanguine hopes of it as a road to power.

The appointment had been scarcely gained, when misconception or enmity threatened to fling him back once more to a private station. No sooner was it known to the Duke of Newcastle, who had accepted the seals, than he waited upon the Marquis over whom he had some influence, and told him that he had unwarily taken into his service a man of dangerous principles, a Papist, and a Jacobite. The statement was immediately communicated in some alarm to the accused. The latter at once admitted that several of his connexions were Roman Catholics, but disclaimed that persuasion for himself and all the members of his own family, as well as every other part of the charge; and further, that his education and conduct while at Trinity College, and the tenor of his life after quitting it, were known to several mutual acquaintance, who were at hand, and might be referred to, to disprove the calumny.

The Marquis saw so much frankness in the explanation, that he readily declared himself satisfied, but not so his independent secretary. He said it was impossible they could longer continue in confidential communication; for that the impression his lordship had received would imperceptibly produce reserve and suspicion, embarrassing to public business, and so unpleasant to the subject of them, that nothing on earth should induce him to remain in such a situation.

Struck with this further instance of openness and spirit, the Marquis instantly assured him, that so far from any bad impression remaining on his mind, his manly conduct had obliterated every scruple, and that if for nothing but what had occurred on that occasion, he should ever esteem and place in him the fullest confidence,—a promise which he faithfully performed. "Neither," adds Lord Charlemont, the relator of the anecdote, and who personally knew the circumstances, "had he at any time, or his friends after his death, the least reason to repent of that confidence; Burke having ever acted toward him with the most inviolate faith and affection, and towards his surviving friends with a constant and disinterested fidelity, which was

proof against his own indigent circumstances and the magnificent offers of those in power."

To this, as well as some other attempts to prejudice him in the opinion of his patron, he alludes in the following letter to his uncle, who, in a serious difficulty in which some of his relations were accidentally involved, had applied to him to use his influence, from being so near to the fountain of power, to extricate them. His reasons for declining to interfere show his judgment and good sense. But in Ireland, in those days, there was an unhappy opinion not even now eradicated, that *interest* could always overpower *law*. The postscript affords another illustration of his considerate benevolence even in the most trifling matters.

"My dear Sir,

"Since I heard from you, our little party in Queen Anne Street has been reinforced by a person who loves you as well as I do, poor Richard of Grenada.\* He left that island in no very good state of health, and after a great deal of vexation from, but also after a great and perfect triumph over, his enemies; a set of the greatest villains that ever existed. He has leave of absence for six months; and is, I think, already as completely re-established in health, strength, and spirits, as we could wish. We all join in giving you joy on the occasion of our friend Katty's (q. Kitty's?) match; and only wish her that she may as happy in a husband as her mother was; and, much as we regard her, we cannot wish her better. Pray remember our hearty congratulations to the young couple.

"I am sincerely concerned for the match that Garret Atty was so unfortunate as to make; and did from the beginning expect no better issue of it, in a county circumstanced as ours is; assure my uncle that there is no one step on earth in my power that I would not gladly take to give ease to his mind, which must be cruelly agitated; I most sincerely pity him; but I believe, when he reflects *how newly and almost as a stranger I am come about (among?) these people, and knows the many industrious endeavours which malice and envy (very unprovoked indeed) have used to ruin me*, he will see that so early a request to suspend the operation of the laws, upon my bare word, against the finding of a jury of the greatest county of the kingdom, and that upon the most unpopular point in the world, could have no other effect than to do me infinite prejudice, without the least possibility of succeeding in the object I aimed at. This I am sure your own good sense will point out to both of you, and will satisfy my uncle that no vain and timorous delicacy, but

\* His brother. A copy of this letter (lately published in a well-conducted periodical work) taken a long time ago, lies among the papers of a gentleman, a relative of Mr. Burke, to whom the writer of this volume is under obligations for much other valuable information.



the real conviction I have of the inefficacy of the application with regard to him, prevents my taking a warm and active part in this affair \* \* \* \* \*.

“It is now time for me to make some inquiry about my young friend, your grandson Ned.\* I have really been so hurried with the many changes which have happened in my affairs, and those of my friends for some time past, that I have not had leisure to inquire much about him. My brother and I will consult some proper method of having him sent to sea under honest and good-natured management; give me some account of him, and whether you still continue of opinion that this way of life will be advisable for him. If your sentiments are the same they formerly were upon this article, I hope you had an eye to the sea in the education he has since had; we may in a short time complete it here.

“You cannot think how happy you would make us by writing often, and being as particular as you can about any thing that concerns you. Thank my cousin Garret for his kind concern in my affairs; whenever he has any account to make up, he will settle it with you; by this you have my letter of attorney empowering you to act for me. If you should see Counsellor Murphy and the colonel, make my hearty compliments to them. Once more I beg to hear speedily from you. Jane and Dick are truly yours; so is, my dear uncle, your affectionate friend,

“E. BURKE.

“Oct. 14, 1765.

“I saw Dick Hennessy here some time ago; his family is well; his wife ready to fall to pieces. I recollect that Garrett † in his life-time used to allow to a poor neighbour of yours some malt, or some such small present at Christmas; let it be continued to him, and charge it to my account. Jenny intended as much more. Let him have it either in that way or any other which he may like better; and if poor Philpot be alive, you will direct that he should have a dozen of port or some good strong wine at Christmas, and now and then a bottle or two before that time. You will advance the money to cousin Garrett, and place it to my account. Until they can be had to Dublin, be so good to be very careful of the papers in your hands.”

By an arrangement with Lord Verney he came immediately into parliament as member for Wendover in Buckinghamshire, his Lordship, in return being gazetted a privy-councillor; and it may be remarked, that though the principal appointments under the ministry, and among others that of the private secretaries, are mentioned in the Annual Register of the year, his own name seems studiously omitted. William Burke soon after-

\* The present Admiral Sir Edmund Nagle.

† His elder brother.

wards became Under Secretary of State to General Conway, and member for Bedwin in Wiltshire; sitting for the latter until the general election in 1774.

Seldom perhaps did a ministry succeed to office under more discouraging circumstances than that under the Marquis of Rockingham. Though of unobjectionable reputation, several of the members were young in office; they were scarcely popular, from being supposed to stand in the way of Mr. Pitt; they were not favourites at court, on account of holding some principles at variance with those who were, perhaps invidiously, called the interior cabinet, or King's friends; neither were they sufficiently united among themselves, either from previous concert or personal attachments, to calculate upon stability, particularly after the death of the Duke of Cumberland, who expired suddenly at a meeting held to arrange some of the business of the session, on the 31st October, 1765.

In America, the discontents were become truly alarming, in consequence of the Stamp Act passed by Mr. George Grenville the preceding February, after being opposed only by a minority of forty in the House of Commons, and without either debate, division, or protest in the Lords, of so little consequence was the matter deemed.

At home, the manufacturers and merchants were incensed at restrictions which threatened to destroy their trade. The country gentlemen of England however wanted a productive revenue pouring into the English Exchequer, to relieve themselves from the burdens arising from the late war; and the colonies insisted that such revenue they could not, and would not afford. One strong and popular party in Parliament declared it treason to the principles of the constitution to tax America without her own consent. Another, stronger in numbers and in influence, declared it equally treason to the crown and legislature to surrender the right of taxation; and the latter opinion eventually proved to be the prevailing one in the country.

The best exposition extant of the state of parties at this period is from the pen of Mr. Burke himself; and on this account, as well as its being a remarkable era both in his life and in the history of the country, it is given here. But it is still more remarkable as evincing his moderation as an historian; for though known in parliament always as a strong partizan, yet in writing anonymously he usually wrote impartially; a degree of candour rarely imitated by literary men, who, however moderate in tone, in their avowed productions, often give loose to violent party zeal, where no responsibility is incurred. To the honour of his moderation therefore be it remembered, that the following was written when suffering under a sense of injury by the belief that his friends and himself had been ejected from office without any just or even assigned cause—

“At the conclusion of our last volume,\* we saw the nation involved in the most distressful circumstances that could well be imagined; our manufacturers at a stand, commerce almost totally annihilated, provisions extravagantly dear, and a numerous populace unemployed, without the means of procuring a livelihood. Such, and so gloomy was the prospect that opened at home upon us, along with the year; nor did the view become more pleasing by extending it across the Atlantic, where the colonies exhibited nothing but scenes of anarchy and confusion, where licentiousness was carried almost to the highest pitch that it possibly could admit, without assuming another name; whilst the profligate and abandoned (as is usually the case in civil commotions) under the specious pretext and mask of liberty and the common cause, gave a loose to their own unruly passions, and committed all those exorbitances which the vulgar are so prone to, when under any pretence they are allowed to assemble in bodies, and through any relaxation of the laws, they have not the fears of immediate punishment upon them. We have before observed, that those of a higher rank amongst them did not take any pains to allay the ferment; it is probable that many of the more serious of them condemned in their minds several acts that were committed, but did not think proper to damp a spirit, which however irregularly or improperly exerted, they perhaps at that time thought it conducive to their designs to keep alive.

“But though a violent resentment supported the spirit of the colonists, they could not but sensibly feel the inconveniencies which an entire stoppage of trade must occasion among a people who had hitherto subsisted by commerce.

“However, their warehouses were full of British goods, for which they had not paid; and the many resources of so vast an extent of country, abounding in the most essential articles of life, prevented them from feeling so much immediate distress as our own manufacturers and labouring poor at home.

“It must be observed, that the enormous sums owing to our merchants, in the colonies, added greatly to the difficulties the public were under, and severely afflicted the trading and manufacturing part of the community. These debts, amounting to several millions sterling, the Americans absolutely refused to pay, pleading in excuse their utter inability, which plea, it appears, the merchants admitted to be reasonable.

“As the nation was never, perhaps, in a more critical situation, so, of consequence, no administration ever had greater difficulties to encounter than the new one. They were under an immediate necessity of enforcing the stamp-act by fire and sword, or else of moving its immediate repeal in Parliament. In the former

\* Annual Register.



case, though there was no doubt of the ability of Great Britain to crush, or even extirpate the colonies,\* yet such decision, if not looked upon as absolute suicide, must, at least, be considered as making use of one arm to cut off the other.

“Fatal were the consequences, which it was foreseen and foretold would attend such an attempt; and it was obvious, that if such consequences should ensue, the first framers and promoters of the obnoxious laws, would have been entirely forgot in the general odium and execration, which would have fallen solely upon the Ministers, who, by enforcing such ruinous measures, had wrought the destruction of their country.

“On the other hand, if the act should be repealed, a colourable appearance was not wanting to charge them with sacrificing the dignity of the crown, together with the honour and interest of the nation to their own irresolution, or else to a causeless animosity which it would be said they bore to their predecessors, and a blind opposition to all their measures.

“The loss of their illustrious friend and patron, the Duke of Cumberland, seemed at this period, to be truly critical to the Ministry; his influence, his authority, his good sense, his patriotism, and the high regard the public held him in, would have added greatly to their strength and security.

“Thus situated, they had an opposition to encounter, consisting of gentlemen, several of whom had held the first employments in the kingdom, and who, for abilities, experience, knowledge of business, property, and connexions, were very reputable, and therefore truly formidable.

“Some of these gentlemen seemed obliged in honour, as well as through opinion, and a spirit of opposition, to embark warmly in vindication and support of measures which had originally been their own; for which it may be supposed they had the natural partiality of a parent, and in defence of which they were determined to dispute every inch of ground with the Ministry. Some also joined them through principle.

“They thought that the insolence of the Americans deserved chastisement, where otherwise, the hardship of their circumstances might merit relief. Others there were who gave themselves no trouble as to the rectitude of the American taxation, but who would have been very glad that their own burdens at home could be at all lightened, by any sums, that could be drawn in any manner, out of the pockets of the colonists; and, in general, it may be supposed that the lovers and assertors of high prerogative naturally chimed in with the rest, upon their own principles. There were not a few also who first kept aloof from, and in due time declared against the ministry, upon some symptoms which appeared early, of their wanting that countenance which, as it

\* On this point Mr. Burke soon changed his opinion.

hath been favourable or adverse, has determined the good or ill-fortune of the several successive systems of administration for some years past. This part of the opposition was, for very obvious reasons, by much the most dangerous.

“To balance this powerful opposition, the administration consisted of gentlemen, who, though many of them were young in office, were yet extremely high in estimation; whose characters were clear, whose integrity was far above suspicion, and whose abilities seemed to grow with the difficulties of the business they were engaged in; their constant adherence also to the cause of liberty had procured them the confidence and good will of the public, both of which they enjoyed in a very eminent degree. They had, besides, some other advantages, as they were not bound to the support of measures at all events, merely because they had planned or advised them; so they could weigh matters with coolness and impartiality, and judge without prejudice or passion; at least they had the happiness not to be obliged to act systematically wrong.

“They appear, accordingly, to have avoided, as well as in matters so critical, perhaps, they could be avoided, the two extremes; in one, which it was apprehended they must inevitably have struck, they neither precipitated affairs in America by the rashness of their councils, nor did they sacrifice the dignity of the crown or nation by irresolution or weakness; and the firmness, as well as temper, which appeared in their dispatches to the different governors, when examined by the House, did them the greatest honour. By preserving this medium, by suspending their own judgment in a matter of so great importance, till they had obtained that of the representatives of the nation, they still left it in the power of the supreme legislature to use healing measures, and did not urge their fellow-subjects, through desperation, to the committal of such acts as could not be forgiven.

“Notwithstanding the prudence of this conduct, it was severely animadverted on by the opposite party. These gentlemen would have the most coercive means made use of, for forcing the new laws and regulations, in which themselves had so great a share, fully sensible of the disgrace that must be reflected on them by a repeal; it is not unnatural to suppose that they wished to see the executive power so deeply engaged before the meeting of parliament, that the legislature could not then in honour recede from the support of it. Upon this principle, the plan of moderation that had been adopted, was opposed with the greatest acrimony, and the severest invectives pointed at administration, for not having immediately employed troops and ships of war to enforce the laws in such a manner, as the outrageousness of the resistance, and the importance of the authority which was resisted, did, as they asserted, indispensably require.

“In the mean time, the American affairs were become a general

subject of discussion, and numberless pamphlets were wrote on both sides of the question; in general, both sides were guilty of the same fault, though in the most opposite extremes; the advocates for the colonies carried the idea of liberty to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, while their antagonists seemed to imagine, that a person forfeited every birthright and privilege of an Englishman by going to live in America. They both also proved a great deal too much, while the former seemed to consider the colonies rather as independent states, in a sort of equal alliance with the mother country, than as dominions depending upon and belonging to her; they furnished the strongest reasons why that irregular spirit of enthusiasm should be timely checked, by making them sensible of their dependence.

“On the other hand, the enemies of the colonies, by exaggerating their power, opulence, and popularity, sufficiently proved the necessity of treating them with tenderness, as if their calculations were allowed to be half-founded, it must be impossible to retain them long in subjection by any other means.

“In this situation were affairs (17th Dec.) when the Parliament met in the latter end of the year 1765. Particular notice was taken from the throne of the importance of the matters which had occurred in North America, and which were given as a reason for assembling the two houses sooner than was intended, that they might have an opportunity to issue the necessary writs on the many vacancies that had happened since the last session, and proceed immediately after the recess, to the consideration of the weighty matters that should then be laid before them, for which purpose the fullest accounts of the American affairs should be prepared for their inspection. Most of the friends to administration had vacated their seats in consequence of the late changes, so that by death and promotions, there were forty one seats now vacant. Some thought it would be ungenerous to make any strictures upon the conduct of the ministers, till they should be in a situation to vindicate or explain it, in their proper persons as members of the house: it appears, however, that others were of a contrary opinion. An Address having been resolved in answer to the king's speech, a motion was made by the opposition, that his Majesty might be addressed to give orders, that copies of all letters, papers, orders, or instructions, sent from the Secretary of State's office, or the other principal departments, to the governors and officers of the crown in North America, together with copies of all answers thereto, and of all other papers relative to the late disturbance there, to the execution of the stamp duty, to the enforcing of the law, and to the quelling of riotous and tumultuous disorders, should be laid before the House. This motion seemed the more extraordinary, as it had been declared from the throne, that the fullest accounts of these affairs should be laid before Parliament.



“The House probably thought the proposition not very decent with regard to the crown, nor candid with regard to the Ministry, in their situation at that time; so that on a sharp debate, the previous question being put, it was carried in the negative by a majority of 70 to 35. The House having then issued the necessary writs, adjourned for the holidays.”

With so many irreconcilable interests and opinions to contend, Ministry opened the session for business on the 14th January, 1766, when Mr. Burke seized the first opportunity of taking an active part in the discussion concerning America. The details are not otherwise known than from a few notes taken by Lord Charlemont. Mr. Pitt, who professed to have no specific objection to the Ministry, though he would not give them his confidence, immediately followed Mr. Burke in the debate, and complimented him by observing, “that the young member had proved a very able advocate; he had himself intended to enter at length into the details, but he had been anticipated with so much ingenuity and eloquence, that there was little left for him to say; he congratulated him on his success, and his friends on the value of the acquisition they had made.” Many of the acquaintance of Mr. Burke were in the gallery purposely to witness this first display of his powers, one of whom was Mr. Murphy; and they all on his quitting the house, crowded round him, expressing the greatest pleasure at the result, the praise of Mr. Pitt being of itself, in the general opinion, a passport to fame. After this he spoke frequently and at length, and again received some unusual compliments; the highest estimate being formed of his powers as a speaker.

Richard Burke, writing to Barry the painter, says, 11th February, a month after the opening of the session, “Your friend (Edmund Burke) has not only spoke, but he has spoke almost every day; as to how I shall leave you to guess, only saying that to a reputation not mean before, he has added more than the most sanguine of his friends could have imagined. He has gained prodigious applause from the public, and compliments of the most flattering kind from particulars; it will add to what I know you already feel on this occasion to be told, that amongst the latter was one from Mr. Pitt, who paid it to him in the house in the most obliging manner, and in the strongest terms.”

A member of the club\* who had treated him rudely on one occasion in consequence of being foiled in a literary discussion, and had found it convenient to absent himself, from the coolness

\* Sir John Hawkins; known for his *Life of Johnson* and *History of Music*, possessed of some literary anecdote, but of no genius, and of a most unamiable character. Some idea of his disposition and temper may be formed from the fact, that for his discomfiture on the occasion alluded to above, he entertained through life a rooted aversion to Mr. Burke, his family, and even to some of his friends, among whom was Mr. Dyer, of whom more will be said hereafter; and occasionally indulged in dark insinuations against them all as men of “desperate fortunes.”

with which he was on this account afterwards received by the other members, expressing some surprise at his elevation, Johnson as promptly as prophetically replied, "Sir, there is no wonder at all. We who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." Writing soon afterward, March 9th, 1766, to Mr. Langton, Johnson said, "We have the loss of Burke's company since he has been engaged in public business, in which he has gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his first appearance ever gained before. He made two speeches in the house for repealing the Stamp Act, which were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder;" adding in another passage the remarkable words, "Burke is a great man by nature, and is expected soon to attain civil greatness."

William Burke, writing in March of the same year, thus expresses himself, "You have heard that his (Edmund's) success has exceeded our most sanguine hopes; all at once he has darted into fame; I think he is acknowledged one of the first men in the Commons:" again, "Ned (Edmund) is full of real business, intent upon doing solid good to his country, as much as if he was to receive twenty per cent. from the commerce of the whole empire, which he labours to improve and extend."

The result of the deliberations of ministry was to repeal the Stamp Act as a matter of expediency, but to pass a declaratory bill asserting the legislative power, in all cases, of the mother country. These, if Mr. Burke did not advise, he had a considerable share in defending, against a strong opposition which he subsequently characterized "as one of the ablest, and not the most scrupulous that ever sat in the house." Neither of the parties, however, of which it was composed was satisfied, because neither of their principles of coercion or concession were fully recognised.

It may be doubted indeed whether any body of statesmen acting upon an enlarged system for the general interests of a great country, could prudently have done otherwise than the ministry did. Wisdom is seldom to be found in extremes. They therefore took a middle course between the violence of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville, who, it must be confessed, gave vent to much wild matter not very consistent with political discretion, the one about almost perfect freedom to the colonies, the other on the duty of unlimited submission from them. The phrase which Mr. Burke had applied to the former gentleman before he had the slightest idea of being connected with administration, of "talking fustian," might now be applied very justly equally to him, and to his brother-in-law.

Both laws ultimately passed, though the ministry never recovered the shock they occasioned; even the members belonging to the King's household voting with Opposition. The mer-

chants, however, were pleased; the discontents in America sensibly subsided, and might not have been renewed, but for what was termed the external taxation plan of Mr. Charles Townshend, unfortunately adopted the succeeding year.

Among other popular measures, a resolution passed the Commons against general warrants; which, in the hope of other favours from his friend the Duke of Grafton, then a member of Administration, drew from exile the celebrated Mr. Wilkes. He appeared, accompanied from Paris by Mr. Laughlan Maclean, an old acquaintance of Mr. Burke, privately in London early in May, 1766, and was determined, as he said, either to make his fortune from the fears of the government, or to annoy it.

The marquis, however, would not see him. Mr. Burke, accompanied by Mr. Fitzherbert, was sent as his deputy, when, after five different interviews, his modest demands to compensate for his sufferings—viz. a free pardon, a sum of money, a pension of £1500 per annum on the Irish establishment, or equivalents—were peremptorily rejected, with a recommendation to leave the country. The negotiation, however, was conducted with such address and temper by the secretary, that after a *douceur* of three or four hundred pounds, collected from the private purses of ministry, this pattern of morality and suffering patriotism retraced his steps to the French capital.

Early in June parliament was prorogued. Toward the end of the month negotiations were on foot for a change of ministry, accelerated by the manœuvres of Lord Chancellor Northington, who, to discredit them in every way, sent back the commercial treaty with Russia, effected by Sir George Macartney after great difficulty and subsequently admitted to be a very advantageous one, three times for revision upon very trifling prettexts. Of this William Burke wrote an account to Sir George; who, through this channel, and also from his young friend Charles Fox, then about to quit Oxford, was much pleased to hear his address and skill in the literary compositions connected with the subject highly eulogized by Edmund Burke.

On the 30th of July the Administration quitted office, without pension, sinecure, or reversion to any of its members, His Majesty to the last being extremely complaisant and even kind to their leader; no cause was assigned for this turn out; no political misdeeds attributed to them; except a supposition that they had delayed longer than was decorous, to make a provision for the younger brothers of the king. The duke of Grafton had relinquished his post in May. He also had no fault to find with his colleagues, but that they wanted strength, which he said could only be acquired by a junction with Mr. Pitt. To that popular statesman, therefore, the details of the new arrangements were committed, by an express intimation to that effect from his



Majesty, who in a manner surrendered to him at discretion, by stating that "he had no terms to propose."

This removal of a body of men of fair talents and obviously good intentions, certainly excited a good deal of observation in the public mind; for though there was no violent popular enthusiasm in their favour, there was not a murmur against them. Some considered them hardly treated; a feeling which increased the marked and unvarying unpopularity of their successors. Others fancied they saw a system at work which would permit no ministry to remain long stationary, lest it should fix itself too strongly in the hearts of the people: and this opinion received some countenance from the pains taken by a minute calculator to turn over the records of office, when it appeared that since Mr. Legge quitted the situation of Chancellor of the Exchequer in May, 1761, not less than 530 changes of place, in and out, all depending on ministerial influence, had occurred; a circumstance perhaps unparalleled in the political history of the country.

On this subject Mr. Burke, in the debate on the City of London remonstrance four years afterwards (March 15, 1770) observed—

"It is an observation sufficiently supported by the experience of all states and ages that a fluctuation of councils in any kingdom is a manifest proof of its imbecility: admitting the position therefore, and applying it to the councils of Great Britain, I believe the records both of ancient and modern history will find it utterly impossible to point out an era of such weakness as the last nine years of the English annals.

"During this period, Sir, the direction of public affairs has been in no less a number of hands than Mr. Pitt's, Lord Bute's, Mr. Grenville's, the Marquis of Rockingham's, the Duke of Grafton's, and Lord North's; so that if we were to divide the nine years equally between them, there would be just a year and a half for every separate administration.

"In the nature of things, Sir, this fluctuation of ministers could not be productive of salutary effects. Each different minister, without impeaching either the clearness of his head or the probity of his heart, had his own peculiar plan of action; so that system continually contradicted system; what was done by the premier of one day was counteracted by the premier of the next, and like Penelope, the whole wisdom of the legislative power was employed to unravel the political web, which cost such prodigious labour in the formation."

The difficulties which occurred in forming the new ministry are sufficiently known to every reader of history. Having disgusted his relation and political associate Lord Temple, the Bedford, the Rockingham, and every other party, Mr. Pitt, now created Earl of Chatham, seemed likely to have the Cabinet

nearly to himself. Driven at length to his utmost shifts, by dint of cutting out reversions and pensions (forming an unfavourable contrast to the system of his predecessors), by harsh dismissals of some from office without known cause, and by as unexpected offers to others who would have nothing to do with him, showing altogether a most perturbed and rash state of mind, he assembled together a most motley group of stragglers, of which, seven years afterwards, Mr. Burke drew the following memorable and not overcharged portrait—

“He put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified Mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers; King’s friends and republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies; that it was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same board stared at each other, and were obliged to ask—Sir, your name? Sir, you have the advantage of me—Mr. Such-a-one—I beg a thousand pardons—I venture to say it did so happen that persons had a single office divided between them who had never spoke to each other in their lives.”

Upon such a slippery pedestal did this eminent man expect to exalt himself to the gaze of the multitude, the chief, almost the only prominent figure in the group. Either dictator, or nothing, had been for some years his motto; success and popular applause had in some measure spoiled him; he dreamt not of meeting with a superior; he could not brook the idea of having even an equal in office, for he had continually interfered in the details of the official business of others, when interference was neither delicate nor called for; he had hitherto loftily upheld the supremacy of his own opinions over those of all the rest of the cabinet put together; he would not condescend to conciliate or persuade any one, yet loftily expected to govern them all. Though therefore beyond doubt the most successful and popular minister which Great Britain ever had, his arrogance had repelled and disgusted nearly as many friends as his abilities or eloquence had ever drawn around him.

This disposition unhappily led him to care little for men or measures, except such as came out under his own especial protection; and it is difficult for an attentive reader of the history of this period not to believe, that to this overweening confidence in himself, and impatience of any thing like equality of talents or power in others, the good of his country was more than once sacrificed. A junction with the Rockingham party while in office would have assured present harmony with America; and their united good sense, penetration, and the recollection of Sir Robert Walpole’s refusal to tax that country, might have even-

tually warded off that contest altogether. The marquis, it seems, made the attempt to win him more than once, but found the truth of Bubb Dodington's assertion that he would be "an impracticable colleague."\*

His own scheme of a ministry was utterly hopeless. The former lofty dictator soon submitted to be neglected by the men of his own making. He sunk in a few months to the degree of a subaltern in the corps which he had embodied and naturally expected to command; measures being adopted in the cabinet with regard to America (namely, the duties on tea, paper, glass, and painters' colours), in the very teeth of his proclaimed opinions and declarations; exemplifying the truth of another remark of the eloquent advocate of the Rockingham party: "When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer minister."

Mr. Burke, desirous to let the public know as much as he knew himself of the cause of the dismissal of his friends, drew up in a few hours an original species of party manifesto, "A short account of a late short Administration;" it blamed no person, made no lamentations, used no laboured arguments, drew no direct inferences; but simply stating in as few lines as possible the public measures of the preceding twelve months, left the reader to draw his own conclusions. This of course is, though insinuated rather than expressed, in favour of the party he had espoused; half concealing the character of a dexterous partizan under that of a calm observer.

A sharper skit upon Lord Chatham and his colleagues, in the *Public Advertiser*, followed in a few days, in the form of a comment on the preceding, under the signature of Whittington, a tallow-chandler in Cateaton Street. It possesses keen irony and humour, was much read and talked of at the time, and has been always attributed to the same pen.† These appear in the

\* Horace Walpole, whose politics were of an opposite cast, seems to have had just the same opinion of this popular statesman as a member of Opposition, that Dodington had of him as one of the Ministry—namely, that it was difficult or impossible to act with him. Writing to Lord Hertford, Jan. 22, 1764, he says, in allusion to the state of the Grenville Ministry,—“For Mr. Pitt, you know he never will act like any other man in Opposition, and to that George Grenville trusts: however, here are such materials that if they could once be put in operation for a fortnight together the present Administration would be blown up.”

† It has likewise been given to Richard Burke; there is no doubt of its having originated with the family, and bears every trace of the *quiet irony* of Edmund. It is subjoined:—

“TO THE PRINTER OF THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER.

“*In the multitude of counsellors there is safety*, says the wise man. If Solomon means privy counsellors, this nation ought to be safe beyond all others, since none can boast such a variety of ministers, and none such a multitude of privy-counsellors.



Annual Register for 1766. Another humorous piece given to him is "Ship News for 1765;" in these the allusions to the chief political characters of the day are happily hit off, and that of Charles Townshend particularly is, in brief, what he afterwards said of him more in detail.

"Ministers, now-a-days, are pricked down for the year like sheriffs; and if none were to make more of their offices than the last did, I fancy we should see them *fine off*, or demand a poll, before they consented to serve. In my younger days, Chamberlain's *Present State of England* would last you seven years, and needed no more to be renewed annually, than a family Bible or a Whole Duty of Man; but now you can no more guess who is in office to-day, by the Court Calendar of last year, than you can tell the present price of stocks by Lloyd's list of Christmas, 1745.

"But the main design of my taking pen in hand, was to refute the silly author of a late silly publication, called, "*A short Account of a late short Administration.*"

"This half-sheet accountant shows his ill-humour in the very title: he calls one year and twenty days a short administration, whereas I can prove, by the *Rule of Three Direct*, that it is as much as any ministry in these times has a right to expect.

"Since the happy accession of his present Majesty to this day, we have worn out no less than five complete sets of honest, able, upright ministers; not to speak of the present, whom God long preserve.

"First, we had Mr. Pitt's administration;

"Next the Duke of Newcastle's;

"Then Lord Bute's;

"Then Mr. Grenville's;

"And lastly, my Lord Rockingham's.

"Now, Sir, if you will take a bit of chalk, and reckon from the 7th of October, 1760, to the 30th of July, 1766, you will find five years, nine months, and thirty days; which, divided by five, the total of administrations, gives exactly one year and sixty days each, *on an average*, as we say in the city, and one day more, if they have the good fortune to serve in leap year.

"How spiteful, then, to cavil about a few days! for you see, by this calculation, the accountant's friends were at most, only forty days short of their allowance; besides, I am told by a beef-eater at court, that from their *kissing in*, to their being *kicked out*, was really one morning, or six hours, more than one year and twenty days; a circumstance which he has maliciously suppressed.

"To proceed in my criticisms on this author, I must take notice of the compliments he pays his friends, at the expense of the Duke of Cumberland. He says, 'they came into employment under that prince's *mediation*,' when the fact is, they came in by his *positive commands*. He conjured them, required them, on their allegiance, to accept; so that they have only the merit of *pressed* men; and like them too, though they are liable to be shot for desertion, as well as volunteers, yet, according to every rule of military justice, they may be whipt out of the service at any time, and have no title to the king's bounty for enlisting.

"The author's spite against the Right Hon. William, Earl of Chatham, in the county of Kent, Viscount Pynsent, in the county of Somerset, appears in the same paragraph. He says, 'they (the late ministers) were removed by a plan *settled* by that nobleman.' How little expressive of his operations is the word *settled*! when we know full well, that, when *only* a great commoner, he refused to be responsible for any measures which he did not absolutely *guide*. The accountant, therefore, should have said *dictated* by the Earl of Chatham, as more suitable to his character, and to real fact, as is confirmed by the inquiry just published, as 'tis said, by his quondam friend Earl Temple.

"These two cronies, it seems, quarrelled about *dictation*; and the very man who a few years ago was glad to play *Bowman* to the great commoner at a city feast, stooping and rising for half an hour together, like the Chelsea water-works, on this occasion stood straight as a may-pole, and refused bowing either *to* him, or *for* him, in the front of the stage, while he sat skulking in a side-box.

Ten days only elapsed after the retirement of his friends, before he set out for his native country. The motives to this retreat, though "free to choose another connexion as any man in the country," do honour to his consistency. "To put himself," as he says, "out of the way of the negotiations which were then carrying on very eagerly and through many channels with the Earl of Chatham, he went to Ireland very soon after the change of Ministry, and did not return until the meeting of Parliament. He was at that time free from any thing that looked like an engagement. He was further free at the desire of his friends; for the very day of his return, the Marquis of Rockingham wished him to accept an employment under the new system. He believes

"On the whole, it is next to *scandalum magnatum*, to allege that the Earl of Chatham, did any thing less than dictate the late changes. He has, once more, deigned to take the reins of government in his own hand, and will, no doubt, drive with his wonted speed, and raise a deal of dust around him. His horses are all matched to his mind; but as some of them are young and skittish, it is said he has adopted the new contrivance lately exhibited by Sir Francis Delaval on Westminster-bridge; whenever they begin to snort, and toss up their heads, he touches the spring, throws them loose, and away they go, leaving his Lordship safe and snug, and as much at ease as if he sat on a wool-pack.

"In the long bead-roll of services done by the late ministry, which the author presents to our belief, one after the other, like the thirty-nine articles, there is one I cannot avoid laughing at, *the refusing to grant patents and reversions*. Their friends say they had the *power*, and *would not*; the more fools they:—their enemies say, they had the *inclination*, and *could not*; *tant pis pour eux*. But my Lord Chatham has already shown, that he had both *inclination* and *power*, by granting patents, in the first week of his administration, to Lord Northington, Lord Camden, and the Hon. Mr. Stewart Mackenzie, brother german to the Earl of Bute, and brother in office to himself, *par nobile fratrum*, which ever way you take it. Reversions were unemployed stocks, which the new ministry found cut and dry, ready to begin trade upon; and this is, as I take it, what our author alludes to by the late administration's 'rendering the ways smooth and easy to their successors.' To be sure, it was rendering the ways easy, to leave wherewithal to grease them; but why they did not employ these helps to smoothe the way for themselves, is indeed surprising. It may be said, before they came in, they always declaimed against reversions; but this is a poor excuse—every body knows that professions of patriotism are like treaties of peace—they only bind till we are strong enough to break them.

"I finish my criticisms on this short performance, with an observation on the harsh and unwarranted word the accountant employs in relating the dismission of his friends: he says, 'they left their offices at the express command of their Royal Master;' thereby insinuating, that his M——y dismissed them spontaneously, and from a dislike to their measures. If their measures were good and popular, (as he pretends) it is unjust to his M——y to say he disliked them. The truth is, that no letters of dismission were sent to those that attended Court; and the countenance and behaviour of his M——y to the late first Lord of the Treasury marked the highest degree of esteem and personal favor; therefore, we may judge they were set aside at the never-ceasing importunities of an all-powerful *Thane*, to whom they never bended the knee; and for the conveniency of a new administration, from whom (perhaps vainly) he expected more complaisance.

"This is the first time I troubled you or the public with my politics, though I have been thirty years in London in the tallow-chandling way, and twelve a common-councilman, and, if the bell rings true, shall be lord mayor before I die. Therefore pray insert my letter directly, as you would oblige,

"Sir, your most humble Servant,

"Cateaton-street, Aug. 1766."

"WHITTINGTON."

he might have had such a situation ; but again he cheerfully took his fate with the party."

The office which he might have had, and which was indirectly offered, was that of a lord of trade ; in his situation this disregard of political consequence, of rank, and emolument, arising from a nice sense of honour even against the advice of his patron, as it was a rare sacrifice, ought to be considered a great one.

Mrs. Burke, his son, and brother, were with him in this excursion, which continued for three months, visiting the little property left by his elder brother, who, as already stated, died in April the preceding year, Cork, Limerick, and some other places in the southern divisions of that kingdom, not omitting a short visit as usual, to his Ballitore friends.

It seems that part of the property which he inherited in Ireland, had been litigated by some of his relations with his elder brother. To this there is allusion in the following letter, and the sentiments contained in it furnish further proof of the excellence of his heart.—

"My dear Sir,

"The present unhappy state of public affairs has required my daily and almost hourly attendance in the House of Commons. I have, therefore, not had a single moment's time to answer your letter of the 15th November, from the county of Kerry, and which enclosed one from Mr. John Henessy to you, until this day. I am equally surprised and shocked at the picture that gentleman has drawn of what he supposes the effects of my conduct. He indeed obligingly attributes it to my ignorance of the true state of the rights and sufferings of the claimants. But if that ignorance had arisen from any neglects imputable to me, the fault would have been nearly the same as if I had been unjust and inhuman with the clearest knowledge of the case.

"I am sorry that I am obliged to remind you of the circumstances of a matter, of which you must yourself be at least as well-informed as I am. I will now, in a few words, lay them before you.

"In the year 1765, my brother died ; and among other things bequeathed to me his interests in Clohir, which is the subject of yours and Mr. Henessy's letter. I understood, that during my brother's life-time, whilst the transaction was recent, and all the parties and witnesses living, the affair was litigated ; that the litigation had proved unsuccessful ; and that a decree of a court of equity had established him in peaceable possession.

"I suppose that nobody will think me unjust in supposing that I had a fair title to what was so left, and so confirmed. In this light things appeared to me, and I believe facts so stood, when, about a year after the death of my brother, I was for two or three weeks in your country ; that is, about eleven years ago, in the autumn of the year 1766.



“It only remains for me to account for what has happened since. Not having been able to visit Ireland in all that long space of time, nor, consequently, to look after the rights of others, or even of myself; I did what I thought most effectual towards remedying the ill consequences of my ignorance with regard to the one or to the other. I placed that affair, together with all the rest of my little concerns in Ireland, of whatsoever nature, in the hands of my friend, the late Counsellor Ridge, implicitly resigning myself to his direction, and referring wholly to him every application that should be made to me in relation to any Irish business. His great integrity, and his sound knowledge in his profession, gave me all the reason in the world to be persuaded, that he never would advise me to the assertion of any right which I could not support in law, and which in honour and conscience was not justifiable. From that time to this I have met with no disturbance. I am persuaded, no better method could be found out to prevent any ill effects which might happen from my long absence, and consequent ignorance of my affairs. I most certainly never desired, or remotely wished him, to controvert for a moment the just rights of any man living. I think I should not have done so for interests of the greatest magnitude in the world, much less for one, which, though in my circumstances not to be neglected by me, is as nothing in comparison of those which I slight every day of my life, in favour of what I think fair and honest. Indeed, it is little worthy of any injustice either to obtain or hold.

“So far as to my just presumption in favour of my legal right. But I must say, that I should think it a very poor account of my conduct, if satisfied with having such a right, I had reason to think there had been any original wrong in the obtaining it, though not by my act or consent. But your father, a man, I believe, of as perfect integrity as ever lived, is my authority for the fairness of the original transaction. I apprehend it is mis-stated in the case which you have transmitted to me. For he expressly told me, that it was carried on, not only with the clearest light into its true nature, but at the earnest entreaty of the parties: my brother, who was in his disposition timid and cautious, having for a long time declined to meddle with it. The narrative says, that on some doubtful intentions of my deceased brother, and on having received an unsatisfactory answer, Mr. Robert Nagle immediately went to Dublin, and equipped himself with a new religion, in order to entitle himself as a protestant discoverer, to bring his bill for vesting in him this whole interest.\* Whether he would not have acted more honestly, and, in the event, more prudently, in endeavouring by some means to en-

\* One of the barbarous enactments of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics of Ireland, by which one member of a family of that persuasion, by becoming a Protestant, could deprive his elder brothers of their property and birthright.

force the agreement he had made, if the performance, as he says, had been evaded, is more than I can say, unacquainted as I am with the intricacies of those unhappy laws\* on which this business turns. Most certainly, those who have adhered to that agreement have no reason to complain of their condition. But by thus endeavouring to set aside his own act, and to get the whole interest into his own hands, to which, if his original title had been valid in law, he would only have been entitled to a part, he did all that he could do for the ruin of his family. His distress, whatever it may be, is of his own making. I could not admit his claim, made as he made it, without affecting my brother's memory, and without bringing to beggary the mother of this unhappy man, his brother, and a very large family of children, his and your nearest relations. Your father, I think yourself—I am sure, Garret Nagle, all told me that this would be the infallible event of his success in his suit.

“As to his mother, whose situation Mr. Henessy paints in such strong colours, I thought I had, in some measure, relieved, instead of causing it. I saw her when I was in Ireland. I then gave something, I forget what, for her relief, and directed in general terms that she should have such helps to put her at her ease as she asked. If she had asked for more than she has done, she should have assuredly had it; for, I trust, I am not altogether grudging, or penurious, on such occasions. This I know, that she seemed perfectly satisfied; whereas, I understood from herself, that she had considered her son's success, and her being turned out of her own little tenement, as one and the same thing. As to Garret Nagle, he knows whether I have been a sharp or oppressive landlord to him, either as to the term of his lease, or to any other particular. There are some others who hold leases under my title, on what I conceive to be very moderate terms. If you, or any judicious person, had told me they were otherwise, I should instantly have thought it my duty to make an abatement. These people are all dependent, perhaps, for their existence, on my right. The question, therefore, in point of humanity (to which Mr. H. appeals) was, whether I ought to suffer Mr. R. Nagle to continue in a distress brought on by his own act, or by admitting his new claims, rejected by a court of law, to subvert and ruin several innocent families, who are, or ought to be, in a thriving condition under me. I did, in general, know that he was in bad circumstances; and though he has not been wholly without relief, I was informed that as he daily threatened new bills, it would be dangerous to give it to him on the terms on which I heard he proposed it from time to time to Mr. Ridge, that is to say, as a sort of composition for his demand. I believe I was recommended to be the more cautious on that head, as I

\* The penal laws alluded to above,

believe he knew me naturally disposed to every possible act of kindness to any of your name, or connected with you by any sort of affinity. Had it been recommended to me by any of you, I should certainly have done all I could to accommodate him in any way. However until the hour of your letter, I never received, directly or indirectly, from any of them, or any one else, any sort of proposal for eleven years. I now understand what you and the friends of that family wish, though I am surprised that Mr. Kiernan, to whom I must leave in a great measure every thing of this kind, was not communicated with. If, by letting the lease you mention, and giving the hundred pounds you mention, that family can be set to rights, I shall be, just as I always have been, willing, voluntarily and cheerfully, to do it, provided it may be done with perfect safety to the derivative interests of all kinds, even to the smallest; for I do not know with what conscience I can consent to sacrifice them, unless I am actually driven to it by the utmost process of law. It is, in truth, rather for them than myself that I have ever been willing to trouble myself much about this affair.

“When I speak of the lease, I mean a lease for twenty-one years; for as the rest of the term is desired as a sort of compensation for what they have lost, I am not willing that such a charge should stand against me. If they lost any advantage, they lost it by no fault of mine; and I am not answerable for not complying with proposals which I never received, and never refused. It is this, and not the difference of the term (which, on calculation, is not very much), that makes me not so willing to comply with the proposal for thirty-one years. In other respects, I must leave the affair to be settled between you and Mr. Hennessy and Mr. Kiernan, to whose joint opinion (if you can come to it) I shall leave the matter. I must expect to be kept out of future litigations; and I wish on that head, when you have adjusted the measures, that Mr. O’Neal should be consulted. He has been kind enough to offer me his assistance in my general affairs.

“I have been several times broke in upon by business, and interrupted in this letter. I have only to add, that if the powerful friends of these people, whom you mention, are as willing to accommodate them as I am, and will give to that the money they proposed in their favour to expend in a contest with me; they will put them much more readily, and much better, at their ease, and show themselves much more their friends. Indeed, I have been ill able to attend to this, or any private business. I am much fatigued, and cannot yet attend myself to any thing but my immediate duty. Let this be my excuse (it is a true one) for doing nothing as yet in the affair you recommended to me in a former letter. Love to all friends. I am ever,

“My dear Sir,

“Westminster,  
Dec. 9th, 1777.

“Most sincerely yours,

“EDMUND BURKE.”



A portion of Mr. Burke's time was devoted to the antiquities and native language of Ireland. Of the latter he knew enough to make some trifling translations, and about five years afterwards communicated to his old college acquaintance, Dr. Leland, who was then writing the History of Ireland, two volumes of old Irish manuscripts, containing several of the ancient written laws of that country in a very early idiom of the language, which he had accidentally discovered in London, on a bookstall.

In allusion to this topic, the tongue of his native country, he observed in conversation with Johnson; "The Irish language is not primitive; it is Teutonic; a mixture of the northern tongues; it has much English in it;" and when the similarity of English and Dutch was mentioned, he added, "I remember having seen a Dutch sonnet in which I found this word, *roesnopies*. Nobody would at first think this was English; but when we inquire, we find *roes*, rose, and *nopie*, nob. So we have the origin of our word *rosebuds*." His acquaintance with the filiation of languages was pronounced by several competent judges to be extensive; a subject which, from his other multifarious occupations, might be supposed to have escaped investigation.

Among other places which he visited during his tour, was the town of Loughrea in the county of Galway, in the neighbourhood of which his sister, Mrs. French, resided. While there, an anecdote is recorded of him not a little characteristic of his kindness of disposition, and for the authenticity of which, a lady (Mrs. B——) a near relative of a gentleman high in office under the present Viceroy of Ireland, and whose friends lived near the same spot, vouches.

Strolling into the town after an early dinner, on a fair or market day, the attention of Mr. Burke was attracted to a group of children, who were always a source of interest to him, gazing with intense admiration on the exterior of a kind of puppet-show, or rude theatrical exhibition, to the interior of which there were a variety of invitations for those who had the means to enter. The anxious curiosity, and the lamentations of the youthful group of their inability to gratify it, induced him to bargain with the proprietor for the admission of the whole, when some of his friends coming up at the moment, insisted upon exercising their privilege as his entertainers, in paying the whole of the expense. "No, no, my dear friends," said he, "this pleasure must be all my own; for I shall probably never again have the opportunity of making so many human beings happy."

It was another proof of his good sense perhaps as much as of a kind disposition, that he was no croaker against poor human nature, or against the present times, as worse than those which have preceded them. "From the experience which I have had," he remarked, "and I have had a good deal, I have learned to think *better* of mankind."

The condition of the Catholics, then suffering under the extreme oppression of the penal laws, and the damp necessarily thrown by these injudicious restraints upon the prosperity of the country, drew much of his attention; it was in fact, as has been before hinted, a subject of early meditation. In 1761, and in 1764, it gave rise to frequent amicable discussions between him and Sir Hercules Langrishe, which after a lapse of thirty years, were renewed in 1792 with more advantage to the subject. The age was not then ripe for much liberality of religious feeling; he therefore prudently abstained from obtruding his opinions on the public until a more favourable opportunity offered; but the materials for a volume on the Popery Laws, an outline of which appears in his works, were at this time partially arranged.

Soon after his return, a letter dated Thursday, Nov. 6, 1766, mentions the particulars of his return; the remainder of it touches on family matters—

“I know you are too much concerned about us to suffer any little event of our lives to be altogether without importance to you. I sit down therefore to let you know that we are at last got safe and well to our own house in London; and had the satisfaction of meeting all those we love at least as well as we left them. Our passage was extremely rough. We never had been in any storm like it. All of us very ill. But thank God we were not very long at sea; and very fine weather, and tolerable roads from Holyhead hither made us ample amends for the tossing we suffered at sea.”

It was during this visit that a lady of rank in Dublin, possessed of some literary talents, is said to have drawn his character in the following lines; and it may be observed here, that his female acquaintance in both countries seemed to join in the same favourable opinion—

“With judgment witty, eloquent with sense,

“Polite with ease, and free without offence.”

An anecdote of this period, illustrative of his jocular spirit, was related by the late counsellor Lennan, of the Irish bar, to whose remembrance it was recalled by Mr. Burke himself, two or three years before his death, when the memory and peculiarities of several of their old friends were brought under review.

Mr. Ridge, a barrister and intimate friend of Mr. Burke, having invited him and Mr. Lennan to dinner, urged, as an inducement for them to comply, that Foote was to be there, and likewise Mr. Doyle\* (a surgeon in Dublin remarkable for wit

\* Mr. Doyle is the author of a well-known piece in Ireland, “Daniel O'Rourke's Dream.”

and humour) between whom he calculated upon a fund of amusement. Mr. Burke however, to play a trick upon the English wit, proposed an amendment of the plan. This was to introduce Doyle, whom Foote had never seen, in an assumed character, that of a substantial, though home-spun country farmer come to town on law business with the best, and who having intruded into the house at the dinner hour, was obliged in courtesy to be invited to the table, a hint being dropped at the same time to the mimic that the opportunity was not to be lost, as he would be a fine subject for his talents to work upon. The scheme took effect. Foote assailed the pretended farmer as the butt of the company, with his whole artillery of broad-faced mirth, ridicule, mimicry, and banter—chuckling with evident satisfaction at his own apparent superiority, and the laughter created against “Squire Ploughshare.” The latter, who had submitted with good humour in order, as the phrase is, to draw him out, at length seemed to pluck up spirit to retort, and pretending gradually to assume confidence, poured out so much wit and humour on the head of the actor, that the latter could not conceal his surprise, and almost confessed himself matched; exclaiming every now and then to his host, “Where did you pick up this barn-door genius?” “Bitter dog!” “Sharp as one of his own sickles!” “Well said for a bumpkin!” and others to the same effect; nor was he informed who his opponent really was until the moment of separation.

The session commencing October, 1766, saw the Rockingham connexion nearly quiescent; a resolution that the land tax be four shillings in the pound, another for restraining the dividends of the East India Company, being carried against the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and with other evident symptoms of disunion in the ministry, rendering an assault from without scarcely necessary.

The fame of Mr. Burke, however, as far as he thought it prudent to exert himself, continued to rise. William Burke, writing about this time, says, “Our friend E. B. has acted all along with so unwearied a worthiness, that the world does him the justice to believe that in his public conduct he has no one view but the public good.”

Lord Charlemont thus writes to Mr. Flood, April 9, 1767: “I some time ago sent to Leland an account of our friend Burke’s unparalleled success, which I suppose he communicated to you. His character daily rises, and Barré is totally eclipsed by him; his praise is universal, and even the Opposition, who own his superior talents, can find nothing to say against him, but that he is an impudent fellow. Yesterday a bill was brought into the Commons to exclude the importation of Irish wool from certain ports in England, when Burke supported the cause of Ireland in a most masterly manner, and the bill was rejected.”



The phrase "impudent fellow," though of course used here in a jocular sense, was in fact grounded upon a jealousy very general in the House of Commons, then infinitely more than at present, and which operated against Mr. Burke for many years, both among those who opposed him, as well as among those who stood in the same ranks with himself, of deeming it a species of presumption in men without parliamentary weight to assume the lead.

*In* that assembly, it appears, this spirit displayed itself sometimes; and *out* of it, burst forth very frequently into virulent abuse, chiefly in allusion to his being an Irishman—his Jesuitical education, as they would have it, at St. Omer—and his *assurance* in attempting to controvert the political principles, or to seize the lead from men so much his superiors in consequence.

Such a feeling, which would not now be tolerated for a moment, was then, perhaps, considering the aristocratic structure of even the popular branch of the legislature, scarcely strange. He was not merely new to the house, but in a certain degree new to the country at large; and being without the essential adjuncts of commanding wealth or high connexions, was regarded in the light of one who usurps a station to which he has no proper claim. For it is another of the characteristics of Mr. Burke in his eventful and uncommon career, to have been the *first* person who attained, under so many disadvantages, to consequence in Parliament and in the country, simply by unaided talents; and thus to have smoothed the parliamentary road for others who have been, and may be again, similarly situated.

It was a source of no ordinary wonder to all, to see such a man, not generally familiar to the political world, and without much known practice in public business, start at once to the highest eminence in that arduous pursuit; it was annoying to many to see their consequence overshadowed, their abilities, by the force of contrast, tacitly lessened, and an utter stranger bound at once over their heads from the retirement of private life to the imposing station of a first-rate orator and an accomplished statesman.

This success, on considering his extraordinary capacity and acquirements, was not, however, so inexplicable as it seemed. Scarcely any one, perhaps none, who ever entered the House of Commons, had laboured so diligently to qualify himself for the duties of the office he was to fulfil, or united with diligence so much genius and power to profit by his labours. His general knowledge was various, and of such ready application, that in argument, or in illustration, his resources appeared boundless. He had carefully studied the ancients, and stored up what they knew; from the moderns he had drawn improved principles of law, morals, politics, and science. To these he could add, when he thought proper, the logic and metaphysics of the schools,

with the more popular acquirements of poetry, history, criticism, and the fine arts; in powers of imagination no orator of any age has approached him; in prompt command of words, and in vigour of language, very few; in felicity, and when he pleased, elegance of diction when he seized the pen, no writer of modern times. He had, in fact, enriched a soil naturally good by such assiduous culture, that it often threatened, and sometimes did bring forth weeds along with the choicest products. All this was accomplished, not in the quiet of affluence, but in the bustle of struggling for an adequate provision in life. "I was not," said he, in his forcible manner, "swaddled, rocked, and dandled into a legislator. *Nitor in adversum* is the motto for a man like me."

He was arrived too at the age of thirty-six—a time when this multifarious knowledge was digested and methodized—when the useful had been winnowed from the chaff; when the mind of a man, if ever worth any thing, is capable of the most vigorous exertion. It was an age, however, at which, as experience has proved, few men (perhaps there is not another instance) who enter Parliament for the first time, are destined to attain the very highest degree of eminence, either as orators or men of business. This of itself would distinguish him as an uncommon man. If the difficulty here alluded to ever occurred to him, it was no sooner thought of than conquered, by an application that knew no intermission, and a zeal that no obstacle could subdue.

Respectable mediocrity as a speaker was as much perhaps as his friends, however high their previous opinion might be, could reasonably anticipate for him. To be distinguished in the Senate, the great arena of national talent, is the lot of few; to become great is one of those chances of life barely within the limits of possibility. Neither is it likely that he knew the extent of his own energies; for it is the occasion alone that elicits them from most men; and these occasions were always at hand in the numerous and extraordinary occurrences of the late reign.

His rhetorical efforts were aided, in an eminent degree, by a tenacious memory, which made almost every thing once submitted to it its own. This perhaps is one of the most valuable gifts of nature to an orator; for it will always supply him with matter, and not unfrequently with wisdom. Men vary in this respect very much. It is the delight of many to read much and to read attentively; but it is in the power of very few to retain what they have learnt with accuracy, or to draw it out in a popular manner, or on popular topics, so as to enliven and illustrate their discourse. No man possessed this faculty in so eminent a degree as Mr. Burke; and of the strength of his

recollection on more recondite subjects, the following, from high authority, is a striking instance.

Some years ago a relative of Mr. Burke having called upon the late Chief Baron Richards, when at the bar, to consult him upon a point of law, the attention of the lawyer became diverted from the case before him to the memory and to the praises of the orator; and as soon as he understood the relationship existing between him and his client, and after a warm eulogy on his various powers, mentioned the anecdote as having come within his own knowledge.

Having dined at a party where, among others, were Mr. Burke and an Archdeacon of Brecon, whose name is not remembered, the latter, who was a man of considerable learning and antiquarian research, started several subjects of conversation, so abstruse or unusual, that few of his hearers felt inclined or qualified to accompany him. Mr. Burke remained silent for some time, until in the midst of a fluent detail of some of the operations of Cæsar in Britain, he stopped the relater short by pointing out a material error as to facts, which changed the whole complexion of the story: the clergyman bowed, without making any reply. One of the more obscure Latin authors formed the next topic of discussion, in a quotation from whom Mr. Burke again corrected him as to two or three words, which was received with the same silent acquiescence. A third subject of debate was an old and very scarce volume containing some curious geographical details, in which also he very successfully played the critic to the surprise of the company. At the conclusion of the evening, Mr. Richards and the Archdeacon walked home together. "Sir," observed the former, "I admired your patience when so repeatedly, and I dare say unnecessarily, interrupted by Mr. Burke; for, from the nature of your studies you must be a more competent judge of such matters than the bustle of politics can permit him to be." "Mr. Burke was nevertheless right, and I was wrong," replied the Archdeacon: "nay, more; I confess I went previously prepared to speak on those subjects, for knowing that I was to meet him, and hearing that he was acquainted with almost every thing, I had determined to put his knowledge to the test, and for this purpose had spent much of the morning in my study. My memory however has been more treacherous than I had imagined."

Before the prorogation in July, an offer is said to have been made him by the Duke of Grafton of a seat at the Treasury Board, but clogged with stipulations to which he refused to accede. A hint of this seems to be dropped by himself in a letter to Barry.

"The measures since pursued, both with regard to men and things, have been so additionally disagreeable, that I did not



think myself free to accept any thing under this Administration." A negociation for the main body of the Rockingham party to join the ministry soon followed, but came to nothing, "because," says he in another letter, "it was not found practicable with honour to undertake a task like that, until people understood one another a little better, and can be got to a little cooler temper, and a little more fair dealing."

In a letter to his uncle (Oct. 21, 1767) he adverts to the visit of some of his relations to England, and their projected farming improvements—

"I am almost apprehensive that my long silence has put even your good-nature and forgiveness to a trial, and that you begin to suspect me of some neglect of you; I assure you there are but very few things which could make me more uneasy than your entertaining such a notion. However to avoid all risk of it, though I have very little to say, I will trouble you with a line or two, if it were only to tell you that we always keep a very strong and very affectionate memory of our friends in Roche's county. Catty and our friend Courtney, I believe, can tell you that we never passed a day without a bumper to your health, which, if it did you no good, was a real pleasure to ourselves.

"I take it for granted that the party was not much worse for their ramble, nor totally grown foppish by their travels—I mean to except Garrett, who certainly will be undone by his jaunt;—he will be like those ingenious farmers in Gulliver, who carry on their husbandry in the most knowing manner in the world, but never have any crop. To complete his ruin, you will tell him I have not forgot the young bull which I mentioned to him; but I find I antedated my promise a little; for he was not calved when Garrett was here. However, my Lord Rockingham has had one of the finest bull calves that can be; he is of an immense size, though when I left Yorkshire he was not more than seven weeks old."

On the opening of the session, 24th November, 1767, he broke ground against the ministry in an impressive speech,\* condemning their general conduct, and happily ridiculing General Conway's lamentations for the recent death of Charles Townshend, and the loss of his projected plans for the public good; which, though none of his colleagues knew what they were, were rather absurdly stated as likely to remove the difficulties of the country.

This step indicated irreconcilable differences of opinion, and in fact some resentment between the Ministry and the Rockingham party. Three meetings to effect a union between them

\* This speech will be hereafter reverted to as a remarkable document connected with the authorship of Junius's letters.

had taken place, but in vain; and then Lord Chatham had resorted to what was considered unfair means (some attribute these means to the Duke of Grafton), to separate the friends of the marquis from those of the duke of Newcastle, though unsuccessfully, and to which he alluded when he said the motto of ministry was *Divide et Impera*. The Bedford party, however, proved more compliant to the wishes of his Lordship and his Grace; and in a fortnight afterwards they coalesced with those in power, forming what was called the Grafton Administration. The Nullum Tempus Bill, the distresses produced by the high price of provisions, the restraining act relative to the India Company, and a few other minor topics, occupied Mr. Burke the first part of the session.

The dangerous state of his uncle's health at this time produced an affectionate eulogium on his character (March 8, 1768) addressed to the son of that gentleman, his cousin, Mr. Garrett Nagle—

“I received your last from Ballyduff, with the most sincere sorrow. Indeed, on the return of my uncle's complaints, I gave up all hope, considering the nature of his disorder and the time of his life. I did not neglect to apply to Doctor Nugent; but at this distance, and with no full detail of circumstances and symptoms before him, he would not venture to prescribe. I make no doubt that he has skilful assistance in his own neighbourhood; and Dr. Nugent would cheerfully have added to it, but from fear of attempting any thing in a case which he cannot be fully master of. I suppose this letter will hardly find my dear friend alive. We shall all lose, I believe, one of the very best men that ever lived; of the clearest integrity, the most genuine principles of religion and virtue, the most cordial good-nature and benevolence, that I ever knew, or I think ever shall know. However it is a comfort that he lived a long, healthy, and unblemished life, loved and esteemed by all that knew him, and left children behind him who will cultivate his memory, and I trust follow his example; for of all the men I have seen in any situation, I really think he is the person I should wish myself, or any one I greatly loved, the most to resemble. This I do not say from the impression of my immediate feeling, but from my best judgment; having seen him at various times of my life from my infancy to the last year, having known him very well, and knowing a little (by too long habits) of mankind at large. In truth, my dear Garrett, I fear I have said this or something to the same purpose to you before; but I repeat it again, for my mind is full of it.”

In March, 1768, parliament was dissolved, the new one meeting in May, when he was again returned for Wendover. About the same time he purchased, for above £20,000, a small estate and agreeable residence, since burnt down, named

Gregories, near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire; the expense being increased by being obliged, much against his inclination, to take the seller's collection of pictures and marbles, as appears by the following letter to Barry:—

“Gregories, July 19, 1768.

“My dear Barry,

“My silence has been long and blameable, I confess it; I am really sorry for it, but I trust you will forgive us some inaccuracies in point of attention, when you are convinced we have none in point of real substantial friendship. Indeed none can value you more, or wish you better, than all the persons who compose this family. On the close of the last parliament, I had thoughts, amounting almost to a settled resolution, of passing this summer in Italy, and had even made some dispositions towards my journey. The pleasure and instruction I proposed to myself from your company, were not the slightest objects of my tour, for which reason I wrote the short note, wishing to fix you at Rome. But I have been diverted another way. We have purchased a pretty house and estate, the adjusting of which has kept me in England this summer. With the house I was obliged to take the seller's collection of pictures and marbles. He was a considerable collector; and though I by this means went to an expense I would not otherwise have incurred, yet I have got some pieces, both of painting and sculpture, which you will not dislike. We are in Buckinghamshire, twenty-four miles from London, and in a very pleasant county. So much for our situation. In other particulars we are, thank God, well as to health, and politically just on the same ground, out of employment, but with a quiet conscience and a pure reputation. Will (Burke) and I are both chosen into this new parliament. I think myself very unlucky in having lost one of your letters; they are all worth keeping. I do not know any that have more curious observations and better expressed. Your last observations on the improved architecture of the moderns, and its inferiority to the ancients is truly curious, and I believe as just as it is ingenious. I am proud to have found it confirm some notions I have had myself on the same subject.

“As to the pictures which you are so good to think of for us, you will regulate them just as you please. We cannot say anything precise as to sizes, because we have left the house in Queen Anne Street, where the doctor (Nugent) now lives, and have had only a temporary residence in town, taken by the winter. As to this house, it is hung from top to bottom with pictures; and we have not yet determined which ought to be displaced. So, as I said before, follow your own ideas; but by no means lose an opportunity of disposing of a picture which may make you friends or money, on our account.



“ We hope to have some of your work when you come home. I am glad of Hamilton’s opinion. It cannot fail of being serviceable to you in some way or other. In the mean time I must press it upon you to live on the best terms with the people you are with, even dealers and the like; for it will not follow, that because men want some virtues, that they want all. Their society will be some relief to you, and their intercourse of some advantage, if it were no more than a dispelling of the unsociable humours contracted in solitude, which will in the end not fail of corrupting the understanding as well as the manners, and of utterly disqualifying a man for the satisfactions and duties of life. Men must be taken as they are, and we neither make them or ourselves better either by flying from or quarrelling with them; and Rome, and the trade of Virtu, are not the only places and professions in which many little practices ought to be overlooked in others, though they should be carefully avoided by ourselves.

“ I remember you wrote to me with a great deal of sense, and much honest indignation, on the subject of some quackish pretences to secrets in the art, such as Magilphs, and the like. We had much of the same stuff here. It is indeed ridiculous to the last degree to imagine that excellence is to be attained by any mechanical contrivances whatsoever. But still the overvaluing of foolish or interested people ought not to induce us wholly to reject what may be subordinately useful. Every thing is worth a trial; and much of the business of colouring, belonging to a sort of natural history, it is rather worth while to make experiments, as many as one can.

“ Forgive my trivial observations. Your friends here, the doctor, little Dick, (his son) and Mrs. Burke, all frequently think of you. Mr. Reynolds and Barrett inquire for you very kindly. Indulge us with your letters as frequently as you can, and believe me, my dear Barry, with great truth and affection, your sincere friend and humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Direct to me in Charles-street, St. James’s-square.”

How the money was procured to effect the purchase mentioned in this letter, has given rise to many surmises and reports, owing to the utter unacquaintance with his family, early life, and pecuniary means, of every writer without exception, who has written respecting him. A considerable part undoubtedly was his own, the bequest of his father and elder brother; the remainder was to have been raised upon mortgage, when the Marquis of Rockingham hearing of his intention, voluntarily offered the loan of the amount required to complete the purchase.\* It has been

\* The writer has been informed since the above was written that Mr. William Burke advanced part of the sum, but this admits of much doubt.

said that he even tendered a much larger sum, which the delicacy of Mr. Burke declined to receive, accepting only what was absolutely necessary, and this upon condition of being repaid the first opportunity.

Honourable as the transaction was to the friendship and delicacy of both, the ingenuity of party abuse has converted it into an attack upon the integrity of the person most obliged; yet, the Marquis was undoubtedly under obligations to him, both publicly, and for some attention paid to the business of his large estates in Ireland, when in that country two years before; less disinterested men, indeed, would have settled the matter otherwise—the one by quartering his friend, the other by being quartered, on the public purse. To the honour of both a different course was pursued; and admitting that the money was never reclaimed, it did not produce a third part of the annual income which the Whig party with great consideration and liberality, presented to Mr. Fox before quitting him 1794.

Several admirers of Mr. Burke have expressed their regret that he ever submitted to be patronized—that he did not rather seek the patronage of the public, and pass his life in what they call literary independence. This is sad drivelling.

Patronage, as in the instance before us, is only a speedier means of accomplishing that which can either not be done at all without assistance, or done only after encountering many and serious difficulties. It is but smoothing the passage of genius to fame. No harm has ever accrued from it, but on the contrary much good; and though a man of talents without such assistance may do much, yet with it he is likely to do better and to do more. Why it should not be accepted, when no degradation is stipulated, and no principle is abandoned, it is difficult for any but the conceited or the querulous to conceive: for he who may have worked his own way to the gate of the temple of fame, shows more of pride than of wisdom to reject the friendly hand held out to introduce him with greater honours to the interior of the edifice.

Private patronage, as it often precedes desert, exhibits disinterested generosity: public patronage, as it only follows desert, is but paying a debt due to celebrity. The former may sometimes arise from vanity, or the affectation of superior discernment, but at any rate it is kind; it is considerate; and will often do more for its object than the noisy and fleeting approbation of the multitude.

The *patronage of the public* is, indeed, a very high-sounding word, which in truth though often used means nothing. The public or people at large never, or almost never, patronized any one, without first having secured, in the language of commerce, value received; its countenance is never under any circumstances gratuitous; it must be purchased by previous service and well known excellence, by exhibiting superior capacity

and power in some particular way, whether in matters of utility, instruction, or delight, before the reward is ever given. Benefits thus paid for before-hand by genius, cannot justly be called patronage.

As to the literary independence spoken of, it is more difficult to be defined, except it be the liberty to labour much and to enjoy little, to be talked of but not rewarded, to glare in the world by the brilliancy of your writings, and to die possibly in personal obscurity and poverty. Even Johnson might have written his fingers off without being the nearer to independence, had it not been for the kindness of Lord Bute, whose name for this alone if for nothing else, ought to be respected by every lover of worth and talents.

And as to the question of honours awarded to eminent authorship, such a thing, though common in every other country of Europe, was never heard of England, till His present Majesty (George IV.) most graciously and liberally bestowed them upon a distinguished poet, for merits purely literary. Remembering these circumstances, let us hear no more absurd lamentations about Mr. Burke's deserting literature for politics.

The aspect of affairs on the opening of the session, November 8th, 1768, seemed not a little threatening. Remonstrances, petitions, and non-importation agreements, seconded by strong private representations to men of influence here, daily arrived from America, which, on the motion for the address, brought out some severe comments from Mr. Burke, on the conduct of Ministers to that country; their passiveness in the invasion of Corsica, and on some other popular topics of the time. Another conspicuous and constitutional effort was on the injustice, sanctioned by a new bill, of bringing Americans guilty of treason in their own country to England for trial.

It is much to be regretted that no report of the speeches of this period is preserved. Mr. Burke's are chiefly known from contemporary verbal report, and from being marked in some books, as "masterly," "ingenious and able," "very eloquent and witty," and many similar phrases, but little or no detail is given; and the notices that do exist are rather in the witty sallies than in the argument; so that the fault of the reporter has been unjustly laid to the speaker. Lord Chatham at length resigned. With difficulties thickening round the Ministry an old and troublesome performer, scarcely less a source of alarm to his friends than to his enemies, appeared upon the scene. This was Mr. Wilkes, again reduced to his last shilling, who thriving by no other trade but patriotism, found it necessary to invite persecution in order to extract money; and, suddenly appearing from Italy as candidate for London, and then for Middlesex, though with an outlawry hanging over his head, unexpectedly gained the election.

The vacillation of Government, the legal proceedings, riots, and general ferment which ensued, require no other notice than



for the employment they gave to Mr. Burke and Mr. Grenville, the leaders of the two divisions of the Opposition, who, agreeing in this, had few other points of union. The question of the patriot's expulsion, so memorable in the history of the country, was carried against the strenuous exertions of both, the 3rd of February, 1769. A motion for an inquiry into the affair in St. George's fields, by Mr. Burke, was negatived by a great majority; Mr. Wilkes's affairs and America afforded him fruitful themes for every week of the session; and, along with several other gentlemen of Buckinghamshire, he presented a petition to the King, at the levee, against the decision of the House of Commons.

Towards the close of it, an argument on the taxation of the colonies occurred between him and Mr. Grenville, which evinced that the latter, with four years' experience, had gained no increase of wisdom on the imprudence and impracticability of that measure. "He behaves," said Dr. Franklin, writing of Mr. G. shortly before this, "as if a little out of his head on the article of America, which he brings into every debate without rhyme or reason; tiring every body, even his own friends, with harangues about and against America."

An appeal by Mr. Grenville from Parliament to the country generally through the medium of the press shortly after this, brought the rival leaders more immediately before the public. It was in a pamphlet entitled, "The Present State of the Nation," written either by himself, or by Mr. Knox, a former secretary of his, under his eye, and which, without formally mentioning names, was designed to praise his own and Lord Bute's measures, and censure those of Lord Rockingham.

The reply of Mr. Burke, in "Observations" on the preceding, his first avowed political pamphlet, and little inferior to any that followed it, displayed the danger of attacking, at his own weapons, a writer so accomplished. In this piece he fairly convicts his opponent of inconclusive reasoning, of inaccuracy in many parts of his subject, and of ignorance as to facts and details on the great principles of commerce and revenue, on which Mr. Grenville particularly plumed himself; and altogether the exposure here made of him, gives us a strong impression what a poor figure an active minister and debater in the House of Commons may make with his pen. A remarkable passage in Mr. Burke's reply on the then financial condition of France, of which Mr. Grenville seemed to know little, illustrates what took place twenty years afterwards, and exhibits the length of view which his more gifted adversary applied to this as to most other subjects.

"Under such extreme straitness and distraction, labours the whole body of their finances, so far does their charge outrun their supply in every particular, that no man, I believe, who has considered their affairs with any degree of attention or information, but must hourly look for some extraordinary convulsion in that

whole system; *the effects of which on France, and even on all Europe, it is difficult to conjecture.*"

About this time Junius broke forth, the champion of popular rights, with a lustre and power over the public mind rarely excelled, and under a mask which time and the most prying curiosity have been unable to penetrate. If circumstantial evidence have material weight in any instance, it is difficult to believe from the documents some time ago published, that Sir Philip Francis was not the man; but he denied it positively, when denial was no longer a point of prudence, as no disadvantage could then have accrued from it. From the first the credit was given to Mr. Burke; and public opinion, after running the round of the chief men of the day, and scanning their powers, opinions, and conduct, has again and again reverted to him as the only one capable of writing those letters. All his private friends, and Dr. Johnson among the number, were of the same opinion, the latter saying, "I should have believed Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters; but Burke spontaneously denied it to me. The case would have been different, had I asked him if he was the author; a man so questioned as to an anonymous publication may think he has a right to deny it." Even many years afterwards, a print shown in Dublin, of the author of Junius, exhibited his figure leaning on a volume inscribed *the Sublime and Beautiful*.

Internal evidence, as far as regards the style, is not to be looked for, where the aim was such profound concealment. Nor in short compositions, like these famous letters, laboriously written as they confessedly were, would it be difficult to adopt and sustain a different tone from that of a long work. They are, in fact, the best modes that could be devised for concealment; for there is an unity of design in a letter, which offers little inducement to diverge from the point or topic with which it commences; the mind also being unexhausted by long application, continues fresh, forcible, and condensed to the purpose in view, whether it be in style or in substance; and these qualities of precision and force may be considered the chief characteristics of these compositions.

It may be observed, that on all the subjects on which Junius dilates, by a specific and pointed attack, Burke and he agreed; while those on which they seemed to differ, as the Rockingham politics, the measures of Mr. Grenville, and a few others, are gently touched; just sufficient to show some apparent difference of opinion, without any formal censure;—a plan just suited to ward off suspicion from an individual, and yet not lower his party in public esteem. Even the allusion to Burke himself, considering there are few names mentioned with approbation, means little. "I willingly accept of a sarcasm from Colonel Barré, or a simile from Mr. Burke." Such a slight, now that he was universally

suspected as the author, might be politic, in order to divert attention from himself. If really meant as an attack, a more unhappy hit could not be made by any writer, who perfectly understood the nature of his own strength; for some of the letters, and many of the leading and admired points in them, are little more than strings of sarcasms and similes. Divest him of these, and, though still a clever writer, he is no longer Junius.

A general belief has prevailed, and there seems no reason to doubt it, that this celebrated writer, whether Burke or not, was a native of Ireland. The style bears little resemblance to that of any English author, but partakes much of the wit, the irritability, the pride, the bitterness of invective, the imagery, the almost morbid jealousy and animosity, which marked some of the political contentions of the sister country, especially those in her House of Commons. He had also, it appears, some sympathy for the grievances of that kingdom, when no English politician threw away a thought upon her. Even the abuse of Scotland and Scotchmen, may have arisen from the same cause; a feeling of rivalry between the nations having often prevailed, when pushing their fortune on the neutral ground of England. Smollett had assailed the Irish character with severity in his works of fiction; and Junius may have thought it but fair to pay off the Scotch with interest, in matters of fact;—it was the only point perhaps on which Johnson and Junius agreed.

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To advert more minutely to the long disputed point, the authorship of these letters, may perhaps be an unnecessary and unprofitable, though it has always been a popular, topic of speculation. But since the preceding was written, the attention of the writer has been again drawn to the subject by a literary acquaintance, who has taken the trouble to investigate the matter pretty strictly with relation both to external and internal evidence, and the result in his mind is a decided conviction that Mr. Burke, if he did not himself write the whole, assisted very materially in the composition of the Letters of Junius. Some trifling circumstances tending to the same point, have likewise occurred to the writer of this work.

On this matter, however, having no favourite theory to support, he is perfectly indifferent as to what degree of weight may be attached to the little evidence he offers. He is not anxious to prove that Mr. Burke was Junius; rather the contrary. Mr. Burke's reputation as an author or politician cannot be raised were the fact proved; but it has been suggested to the writer, that in a work professing to be a faithful and impartial biography, he is not authorised to reject any matters, supported by probabilities, which relate to his principal, and through him, to the solution of a curious literary question long interesting to the public



mind, from an opinion, that in the eyes of certain persons, his fame, in consequence of it, might suffer some diminution.

The additional circumstances may be stated in a few words.

1. It appears to have been the general opinion then and since, that Mr. Burke wrote much in the newspapers between the years 1766 and 1772, when finding Lord North's administration established too firmly to be shaken, the practice was given up as being no longer likely to prove useful. The fact perhaps is, that Richard and William Burke wrote what was attributed to Edmund.

2. It was the universal belief at the time, with both his own and the other party, that he was Junius; and contemporary opinion, as formed from a variety of minor circumstances which do not come within the knowledge of future inquirers, is perhaps, on such occasions, the truest. As such, he was often assailed in the newspapers of the day, as "coming from the land of impudence," the "Hibernian Secretary," the "lad whose face had been bronzed in the Liffey," the "dealer in the sublime and beautiful," and much more of the same ribaldry.

3. From the first it was believed that Junius was an Irishman; and there are many points in the Letters to corroborate this belief. In addition to others which have been mentioned by writers on the subject, the allusion to "a job to accommodate two friends at the castle" is a phrase which none but an Irishman, or an Englishman intimately acquainted with the localities of the Irish Government, would use; the *castle* being the residence of the Viceroy, and being used in Ireland only as a conventional phrase to signify whence any measure adopted by those in power in that country originates.

4. Another point is still more striking. In the letter to Lord North, 22d August, 1770, Junius reproaches Wilkes's opponent in the Middlesex election in the following terms: "He has discovered a new line in the human character; *he has degraded even the name of Luttrell*, and gratified his father's most sanguine expectations." An Englishman will try his recollection in vain to discover why the name of Luttrell in particular, more than any other name, should be degraded; but an Irishman, more especially from the south of Ireland, as Mr. Burke was, will explain the matter immediately.

"Colonel Luttrell," says a late interesting writer, "an officer of the Irish (or James II.'s) army, although completely vindicated in Lord Westmeath's letter to Mr. Harris of the charge, is still stigmatized as the betrayer of an important passage of the Shannon (in the Siege of Limerick, 1691). On stormy nights when gusts of wind agitate the river, while

'Foaming and fierce it rolls with fury on,'

the neighbouring fisherman or peasant usually execrates 'that

traitor Luttrell, whose spirit is abroad shrieking on the waters.' ”\*

So strong is this prejudice, that the late Lord Carhampton, when in that neighbourhood some years ago, hearing it was still very prevalent, and desirous of trying how far it might be carried, asked a countryman who did not know him, what he would do to a Luttrell if he had one in his power? “All the harm I could,” was the reply. Junius, it may be remarked, gives no explanation of the stigma he wishes to fix on the family; but treats it as a matter familiar to the reader.

5. It has been often said, that the writer could not have been educated at an English university, from using the term *Collegian* instead of that of *Gownsmen*, as applicable to their inmates; the former being unknown at Oxford and Cambridge. On the contrary, at Dublin, the appellation is *Collegian*. This would therefore seem another proof of the writer being a native of Ireland, or educated in her university; and if so, suspicion will again point at Mr. Burke.

6. It has been frequently remarked that the *law* which Junius displays is not that of a practising lawyer, but of a clear-headed, shrewd man, who had attentively studied the theory as a science, without knowing the minutiae of it as a profession. Mr. Windham, Mr. Malone, and others intimately acquainted with Mr. Burke, used to say, that this was exactly the species of law which he possessed.

7. The late Dean Vincent was heard to say, that a gentleman connected with the education of young Burke when at Westminster School, in 1769, could pretty well tell when a Junius was to appear.

8. A story is told by an eminent living poet, that a gentleman calling on Mr. Burke in 1770, during the publication of the letters, when the belief was strong of his being the author, was shown into a room where William Burke, who had just come in, was sitting, when Mrs. Burke soon entered, and after some general conversation, whispered to the latter in a secret manner, “Ned thinks he has outdone himself to-day.” This anecdote, however, proves little; for he was then writing the pamphlet on the discontents, to which the remark was most probably applied.

9. Mrs. Burke once admitted that she *believed* Mr. Burke knew the author of the Letters, but that *he* certainly did not write them. There is, however, stronger evidence of this knowledge.

10. It is an undoubted fact that he himself indirectly acknowledged to Sir Joshua Reynolds, *he knew the writer of Junius's Letters*, but gave a kind of intimation at the same moment, that he wished nothing more to be said to him on the subject.

11. Sir Joshua and Mr. Malone believed firmly he was con-

\* Researches in the South of Ireland, by Thomas Crofton Croker, pp. 47, 48.

cerned in the composition, but that some other person wrote the rough draft, while he polished and finished them for the public eye, with such additions as he thought proper. If this supposition be true, it serves to solve some points which would be otherwise obscure. It would confirm the general impression that more than one person was concerned in their composition. It would in some degree save Mr. Burke's veracity in the conversation with Dr. Johnson, "that he did *not write* the Letters." It would be some justification, likewise, in case of discovery, of the compliment paid by him to Junius in the House; allowing that this was not a mere finesse to ward off suspicion.

The person who is supposed to have drawn the first draft of the Letters, was Mr. Dyer, a most intimate friend of the Burkes, a member of the club, and a learned and able man, though little known as an author. He had lived much abroad, and by the friendship of Mr. Chamier, was made a commissary in the army, through which, and by mixing a good deal in the bustle of life in London, he became acquainted with some occurrences in the War Office, and with the anecdotes, always in circulation, of the political matters and characters of the day. He died in September 1772; thus seeming to confirm another very general opinion, that the writer, whoever he was, did not long survive the conclusion of the Letters.

Mr. Burke drew up a character of him for the newspapers of the day: but a more remarkable circumstance was the *intrusion*, as it is said, of Mr. William Burke into his lodgings after his death, and cutting up a great variety of papers into the smallest possible shreds (there being no fire at that season of the year to burn them), which were thickly strewed all over the room, to the great surprise of Sir Joshua Reynolds, one of the executors, who, entering soon after, and asking for an explanation, was informed, "they were of great importance to him (Mr. Burke), but of none to any other person."

12. If Mr. Burke were Junius, it would serve to explain why, under the latter name, he made no reply to the attack of Johnson, from the reluctance which he felt to assail with severity in anonymous warfare, a man for whom he entertained a warm regard, and with whom, in his proper character, he lived in habitual friendship.

13. Much has been said as to the diversity of style between Burke and Junius, in proof of their not being one and the same person. This species of evidence will be differently estimated by different literary men. The aim of the writer of the Letters, it must always be remembered, was such profound concealment, that it was not likely he would himself, if a practised writer, furnish so obvious a clue to discovery. But after all, there is not, perhaps, so much difference in the *spirit* of Burke and Junius, as in the *manner*.



The sentences of Junius are differently constructed from those of Mr. Burke; the former aim at terseness, point, and an epigrammatic turn: but the sarcasms, the imagery, the invective, the similes and illustrations drawn from astronomy, chemistry, optics, and a variety of other sciences, are strongly characteristic of the school of the latter. No other writers, at least in our language, but Burke and Junius, have called in such auxiliaries in the discussion of political subjects. The literary friend already alluded to has taken the trouble to collate a variety of passages from both writers, from which it would seem, that a very strong similarity exists, or that they are in all probability, emanations of the same mind. Such, the present writer has been informed, was the opinion of the late Mr. Malone, who, in a conversation with a Mr. O'Farrell, of Dublin, said, to use his own words, "that unquestionably much of the spirit, argument, and ornament of Junius, were *Burkish*."

14. Another, and perhaps stronger, coincidence remains to be noticed.

It is well known to the readers of Woodfall's edition of Junius, that the latter writer corresponded with Woodfall, as printer of the Public Advertiser, for two or three years before he assumed his more celebrated Roman designation, under a variety of signatures affixed to his printed essays, while in private, to Woodfall, his papers were commonly distinguished by the letter C.

At the opening of the session, November 24, 1767, Mr. Burke made a speech, already alluded to, on the address, touching sarcastically on the lamentations for the loss of Mr. Charles Townshend's plans for remedying the general distress about provisions, though none of his colleagues knew what these plans were—on the foreign relations of the country—the dearness of corn—the Manilla ransom—and the insidious efforts made by Ministry to separate the most intimate political friends.

The debates not being then reported, this speech would necessarily have shared the fate of other speeches of the time in falling still-born in the House, had not a correspondent forwarded it to the printer of the Public Advertiser,—not however as the speech of Mr. Burke in the House of Commons, but as *his own speech* delivered to his *club* some time before, and, as containing some home truths, not unworthy of being known to the public at large.\* This correspondent's signature in the newspaper was Y. Z.; but to Woodfall privately it was C.—the identical writer two years afterward of the Letters of Junius.

It may be asked, whether this communication was not recognized at the time as the speech of Mr. Burke? This was by no means probable. The sum total of what passed in Parliament

\* See Woodfall's Junius, vol. ii. p. 498. Let the reader compare this with Burke's first speech reported in the Parliamentary Debates.

was certainly well known to the country, but not the particular speeches of individuals, not even an outline of them, except on occasions when general attention became excited to an important topic. And, admitting that it had been so known, there was nothing before the public, whatever suspicion there might have been in Woodfall's own bosom, to connect him two years afterwards, when the whole circumstance was probably forgotten, with the writer of Junius. It must likewise be remembered that the debates of that period, meagre as the materials are, were not published collectively until 1792, when this speech appeared for the first time as Mr. Burke's; and, if we may believe Debrett's general assertion of the speeches of the surviving members having been submitted for their approval, it may be taken as in the main correct. Had he recollected, however, that this piece was sent by him to the newspapers in 1767, with the same private signature affixed as that which afterwards accompanied the Letters of Junius, we may be assured no such acknowledgment of its correctness would have been made; the thread of connexion indeed was slight—was only known to Woodfall—and might not even occur to him—but still attention, if once excited, might follow the clue, such as it was, and lead, if not to certainty, at least to suspicion.

If Mr. Burke did not send this speech to Woodfall, or give it to Junius for that purpose, the latter person must have been present on the occasion, and taken notes of it himself. Why it was sent for publication, except from the natural partiality of a parent, is not so obvious; for it does not excel in that satire, force, or violence, in which Junius afterwards delighted, but on the contrary, bears a calm and moderate tone. Neither is it to be explained why this writer, whether known as Y. Z., or C., or Junius, should call it *his* speech.

The coincidence on this matter is at least curious; the speech is the first of Mr. Burke's which is reported in the parliamentary debates; and stands likewise first in the four volumes of his speeches collected and published by an anonymous editor in 1816. None of the circumstances here stated prove Mr. Burke to be Junius; neither perhaps are they of much weight even as grounds for suspicion; but for the reasons already stated, the writer did not deem himself authorised to suppress them altogether.

In addition to this it may be observed that though Junius asserts "he was the sole depository of his own secret," it is almost certain this could not be the case, from the Letters being occasionally in different hand-writings. Mr. Burke could have two or three amanuenses in his family who would not betray him.

In a private letter to Woodfall, Junius again contradicts his assertion by the following passage:—"The truth is, that *there are people about me whom I wish not to contradict, and who had rather see Junius in the papers ever so improperly than not at all*" (Private Letters, No. 6). This account of his situation, if

true, would again apply very strongly to that of Burke,—urged to write perhaps by his friends R. and W. Burke, or possibly by some of the members of his party, privy to the secret. This circumstance altogether deserves further inquiry.

It may also be remarked, that three of the persons whom Junius attacked, namely, Lord Mansfield, Sir William Blackstone, and Sir William Draper, believed for many years that Mr. Burke was the man; it does not appear however whether or not their opinions ultimately changed.\*

Mr. Burke spent the recess at Gregories in superintending the repairs and alterations of his house; and in attention to rural business, proved as active a farmer as any in the country, being often in the fields in a morning as soon as his labourers. It became a luxury, he used to say, after the noise, heat, and drudgery of the House of Commons. In town he usually had a temporary residence during the sitting of parliament, some of which were in the Broad Sanctuary, Fludyer Street, Charles Street, Duke Street, 37 Gerrard Street, and some others. Among his friends were some of the most distinguished men of rank in the country. At Mrs. Montagu's famous coteries, about that time in their zenith, he used occasionally to meet nearly all the literati of the three kingdoms, and the most remarkable characters in London.

Amid these engagements, and the labours of politics, a more humble friend was not forgotten, either in pecuniary assistance, or in letters containing the most friendly and enlightened advice.

His protection of Barry has been already noticed. The moment his own means became extended by being connected with Administration, he recommended him, seconded by the advice of Reynolds, to go to Italy for improvement, and with William Burke, offered to the best of their power to maintain him while there.

The painter set out in October, 1765, and remained abroad above five years. During the whole of this time he earned nothing for himself, and received no supplies from any other person than his two generous friends, who fulfilled their promise amid serious

\* Since this was written, Mr. Coventry, in an ingenious volume, has claimed the authorship of these letters for Lord George Sackville, and the evidence he brings forward is undoubtedly strong. Many points in fact, render his Lordship a fair object of suspicion; others of minor importance would seem to render his participation in the affair improbable. But it is a curious circumstance, that against the claim of every person to whom these letters have been attributed very solid objections may be urged; the only explanation of which perhaps is, that Junius (for the purpose of concealment), did not always write his real sentiments, or did not write as the public supposed he would write, in his proper character.

Still more recently, when this work was partly printed off, a pamphlet has appeared giving the authorship to Mr. Burke, and adducing in proof of it some of the evidence just cited in the preceding pages, without any expectation by the present writer, of finding a coadjutor in the question.



difficulties and claims of their own, in which William, in one of his letters, was obliged to confess, that "cash was not so plentiful as he could wish." A fact of this kind, so rarely imitated by the highest rank, or the greatest wealth, speaks more for the virtues of the heart than a volume of panegyric; it is, however, only one instance among many of the benevolence of Mr. Burke.

Barry felt the weight of his obligations. Of Dr. Sleigh, he said, "He first put me upon Mr. Burke, who has been, under God, all in all to me." Writing to the Doctor himself, he says, "To your goodness I owe Mr. Burke and his family, which, in one word, is owing you all that is essential to me." To Mr. Burke he writes, "I am your property." And again, "you ought surely to be free with a man of your own making, who has found in you father, brother, friend, every thing."

A constant correspondence with their protégé was maintained by the whole family, chiefly however through William, as being less occupied in business; but occasionally with Edmund, who addresses him with the affection of a brother, and whose remarks and admonitions are so fine in themselves, and display such an intimate acquaintance with the arts and with the world, couched in the most eloquent style, that it would be a crime equally against his reputation, and against the enjoyment of the reader, not to give two or three of the principal, in addition to the one already quoted. The first was written while the artist remained in Paris; the others when he was at Rome.

"My dear Barry,

"I hope your kindness and partiality to me will induce you to give the most favourable construction to my long silence. I assure you that disregard and inattention to you had not the smallest share in it. I love you and esteem you, as I always did ever since I knew you; and I wish your welfare and your credit (which is the best gift of Providence in the way of fortune) as much as any man; and am much pleased with the step I hear you are taking to advance them. Mr. Maclean,\* your very good friend, tells me that you are preparing to set out for Italy. As to what regards you personally, I have only to advise, that you would not live in a poor or unequal manner, but plentifully, upon the best things, and as nearly as you can in the ordinary method of other people.

"Singularity in diet is in general, I believe, unwholesome; your friend the doctor is in that way of thinking. I mention this, as Maclean tells me you have been ill, by ordering your diet on a plan of your own. I shall be happy in hearing that you are thoroughly recovered and ready to proceed on your journey with alacrity and spirit.

\* Afterwards Under Secretary of State to Lord Shelburne.

“With regard to your studies, you know, my dear Barry, my opinion. I do not choose to lecture you to death; but to say all I can in a few words, it will not do for a man qualified like you to be a connoisseur and a sketcher. You must be an artist; and this you cannot be but by drawing with the last degree of noble correctness. Until you can draw beauty with the last degree of truth and precision, you will not consider yourself possessed of that faculty. This power will not hinder you from passing to the great style when you please; if your character should, as I imagine it will, lead you to that style in preference to the other. But no man can draw perfectly, that cannot draw beauty. My dear Barry, I repeat it again and again, leave off sketching. Whatever you do, finish it. Your letters are very kind in remembering us; and surely, as to the criticisms of every kind, admirable. Reynolds likes them exceedingly. He conceives extraordinary hopes of you, and recommends, above all things, to you the continual study of the *Capella Sestina*, in which are the greatest works of Michael Angelo. He says he will be mistaken, if that painter does not become your great favourite. Let me entreat that you will overcome that unfortunate delicacy that attends you, and that you will go through a full course of anatomy with the knife in your hand. You will never be able thoroughly to supply the omission of this by any other method.

“The public exhibition is, I think, much the best that we have had. West has two pieces, which would give you great hopes of him: I confess, some time ago, I had not any that were very sanguine; but in these he has really done considerable things. Barrett\* inquires very kindly for you—he makes a very good figure in this exhibition.”

“My dear Barry,

“I am greatly in arrear to you on account of correspondence; but not, I assure you, on account of regard, esteem, and sincere

\* This artist afforded another instance of the benevolence and friendship of Mr. Burke whenever circumstances placed it in his power to be of service. Barrett, it seems, had fallen into difficulties by the improvidence too frequently attendant on genius, and the fact coming to the ears of Mr. Burke in 1782, during his short tenure of power, he bestowed upon him a place in Chelsea Hospital, which he enjoyed for the remainder of his life. Mr. Young gives the following account of this artist, appended to a landscape of his in Sir John F. Leicester's gallery:—

“The first notice of the pictures of this artist that appears on record is his obtaining from the Society of Arts a premium of 50 guineas.

“He was considered the best landscape painter of the time he lived in; and although the patrons of art cannot be accused of not duly appreciating his merits, yet after a long and successful career almost without a rival, partly from a liberality of disposition and an indulgence in expensive habits, he was not enriched by his professional labours.

“His merits were recognized by the Royal Academy, of which he was elected a member; and during the latter part of his life he enjoyed an appointment in Chelsea Hospital, given to him by his friend and patron, Edmund Burke.”

good wishes. My mind followed you to Paris, through your Alpine journey, and to Rome; you are an admirable painter with your pen as well as with your pencil; every one to whom I showed your letters felt an interest in your little adventures, as well as a satisfaction in your description; because there is not only a taste but a feeling in what you observe, something that shows you have a heart; and I would have you by all means keep it. I thank you for Alexander; Reynolds sets an high esteem on it, he thinks it admirably drawn, and with great spirit. He had it at his house for some time, and returned it in a very fine frame; and it at present makes a capital ornament of our little dining-room between the two doors. At Rome you are, I suppose, even still so much agitated by the profusion of fine things on every side of you, that you have hardly had time to sit down to methodical and regular study. When you do, you will certainly select the best parts of the best things, and attach yourself to them wholly. You, whose letter would be the best direction in the world to any other painter, want none yourself from me who know little of the matter. But as you were always indulgent enough to bear my humour under the name of advice, you will permit me now, my dear Barry, once more to wish you, in the beginning at least, to contract the circle of your studies. The extent and rapidity of your mind carries you to too great a diversity of things, and to the completion of a whole before you are quite master of the parts, in a degree equal to the dignity of your ideas. This disposition arises from a generous impatience, which is a fault almost characteristic of great genius. But it is a fault nevertheless, and one which I am sure you will correct, when you consider that there is a great deal of mechanic in your profession, in which, however, the distinctive part of the art consists, and without which the first ideas can only make a good critic, not a painter.

“I confess I am not much desirous of your composing many pieces, for some time at least. Composition (though by some people placed foremost in the list of the ingredients of an art) I do not value near so highly. I know none who attempts, that does not succeed tolerably in that part; but that exquisite masterly drawing, which is the glory of the great school where you are, has fallen to the lot of very few, perhaps to none of the present age, in its highest perfection. If I were to indulge a conjecture, I should attribute all that is called greatness of style and manner of drawing, to this exact knowledge of the parts of the human body, of anatomy and perspective. For by knowing exactly and habitually, without the labour of particular and occasional thinking, what was to be done in every figure they designed, they naturally attained a freedom and spirit of outline; because they could be daring without being absurd; whereas ignorance, if it be cautious, is poor and timid; if bold, it is only blindly presumptuous. This



minute and thorough knowledge of anatomy, and practical as well as theoretical perspective, by which I mean to include foreshortening, is all the effect of labour and use in *particular* studies, and not in general compositions. Notwithstanding your natural repugnance to handling of carcasses, you ought to make the knife go with the pencil, and study anatomy in real, and if you can, in frequent dissections. You know that a man who despises, as you do, the minutiae of the art, is bound to be quite perfect in the noblest part of all, or he is nothing. Mediocrity is tolerable in middling things, but not at all in the great. In the course of the studies I speak of, it would not be amiss to paint portraits often and diligently. This I do not say as wishing you\* to turn your studies to portrait-painting; quite otherwise; but because many things in the human face will certainly escape you without some intermixture of that kind of study.

“Well, I think I have said enough to try your humility on this subject. But I am thus troublesome from a sincere anxiety for your success. I think you a man of honour and of genius, and I would not have your talents lost to yourself, your friends, or your country, by any means. You will then attribute my freedom to my solicitude about you, and my solicitude to my friendship. Be so good to continue your letters and observations as usual. They are exceedingly grateful to us all, and we keep them by us.

“Since I saw you I spent three months in Ireland. I had the pleasure of seeing Sleigh but for a day or two. We talked much about you, and he loves and esteems you extremely. I saw nothing in the way of your art there which promised much. Those who seemed most forward in Dublin when we were there, are not at all advanced, and seem to have little ambition. Here they are as you left them; Reynolds every now and then striking out some wonder. Barrett has fallen into the painting of views. It is the most called for, and the most lucrative part of his business. He is a wonderful observer of the accidents of nature, and produces every day something new from that source, and indeed is on the whole a delightful painter, and possessed of great resources. But I do not think he gets forward as much as his genius would entitle him to; as he is so far from studying, that he does not even look at the pictures of any of the great masters, either Italians or Dutch. A man never can have any point of pride that is not pernicious to him. He loves you, and always inquires for you. He is now on a night piece which is indeed noble in the conception; and in the execution of the very first merit. When I say he does not improve, I do not mean to say that he is not the first we have in that way, but that his capacity ought to have carried him to equal any that ever painted landscape.

“I have given you some account of your friends among the painters here, now I will say a word of ourselves. The change

of the Ministry you know was pleasing to none of our household. . . . Your friend Will. did not think proper to hold even the place he had. He has therefore, with the spirit you know to belong to him, resigned his employment. But I thank God, we want in our new situation neither friends, nor a reasonable share of credit. It will be a pleasure to you to hear, that if we are out of play, others of your friends are in. Maclean is under-secretary in Lord Shelburne's office; and there is no doubt but he will be, as he deserves, well patronized there."

April 26, 1767.

"My dear Barry,

"I am rather late in thanking you for the last letter, which was, like all the others, friendly, sensible, and satisfactory. We have had a pretty stirring session hitherto, and, late as it is, I don't think we have got through three parts of it. The opposition to the present Ministry has been carried on with great vigour, and with more success than has of late years usually attended an opposition to Court measures. You know too much of our situation and temper not to see that we have taken a pretty active and sanguine part. You will rejoice to hear that our friend William has exerted himself two or three times in public with the highest credit. (An account is here given of his brother Richard breaking his leg.)

"The exhibition will be opened to-morrow. Reynolds, though he has, I think, some better portraits than he ever before painted, does not think mere heads sufficient, and having no piece of fancy finished sends in nothing this time. Barrett will be better off than ever. He puts in a night piece in a very noble style, and another very beautiful landscape, with a part of a rainbow on a waterfall. They seem to be both excellent pictures. Jones, who used to be poet laureate to the exhibition, is prepared to be a severe and almost general satirist upon the exhibitors. His ill-behaviour has driven him from all their houses, and he resolves to take revenge in this manner. He has endeavoured to find out what pictures they will exhibit, and, upon such information as he has got, has beforehand given a poetic description of those pictures which he has not seen. I am told he has gone so far as to abuse Reynolds at guess, as an exhibitor of several pictures, though he does not put in one. This is a very moral poet. You are, my dear Barry, very kind in the offers to copy some capital picture for me; and you may be sure, that a picture which united yours to Raphael's efforts would be particularly agreeable to us all. I may one time or other lay this tax upon your friendship; but at present I must defer putting you to the trouble of such laborious copies. Because, until we have got another house, it will be impossible for me to let you know what size will suit me. Indeed, in our present house (Queen Anne-street), the best picture of any tolerable size would embarrass me. Pray let me hear

from you as often as you can; your letters are most acceptable to us. All your friends here continue to love and constantly to inquire after you. Adieu, dear Barry, and believe me most sincerely yours,  
 “E. BURKE.”

August 24, 1767.

“My dear Barry,

“It is with shame I find myself so late in answering a letter which gave me such sincere pleasure as your last. Whatever you may think of my delay, be persuaded that no want of regard for you had the least share in it. We all remember you with much esteem and affection; and I hope we are not, any of us, of a character to forget our friends, because they are fifteen hundred miles distance from us, and away a year or two. I did indeed strongly flatter myself that Will and I might probably have taken a trip to Rome in the recess. But the session ran to an unusual and mortifying length; and as soon as it closed, a political negotiation, for bringing my Lord Rockingham to the Administration, was opened, and thus our summer insensibly slid away; and it became impossible for me, either in his company, or alone, to begin an enterprise that would demand four good months at least. The mention I have made of this negotiation has, I dare say, put you a little in a flutter.\*. . . At present there is no prospect of a sudden change; therefore we remain as we are; but with all the content which consciences at rest and circumstances in no distress can give us. We are now in the country, in a pretty retired spot about three miles from town. Richard is at Southampton for the benefit of sea-bathing, which has already been useful to his leg, and he gathers strength in the limb every day. This is our situation. As to your other friends, Barrett has got himself also a little country-house. His business still holds on; and indeed he deserves encouragement, for, independent of being a very ingenious artist, he is a worthy and most perfectly good-humoured fellow. However he has had the ill-luck to quarrel with almost all his acquaintance among the artists, with Stubbs, Wright, and Hamilton; they are at mortal war, and I fancy he does not stand very well even with West. As to Mr. Reynolds, he is perfectly well, and still keeps that superiority over the rest, which he always had, from his genius, sense, and morals.

“You never told me whether you received a long, I am afraid not very wise letter from me, in which I took the liberty of saying a great deal upon matters which you understand far better than I do. Had you the patience to bear it? You have given a strong, and, I fancy, a very faithful picture of the dealers in taste with you. It is very right that you should know and remark their little arts; but as fraud will intermeddle in every transaction of

\* The sentence omitted here has been already quoted in another part of this work.



life, where we cannot oppose ourselves to it with effect, it is by no means our duty or our interest to make ourselves uneasy, or multiply enemies on account of it. In particular you may be assured that the traffic in antiquity, and all the enthusiasm, folly, or fraud, that may be in it, never did nor never can hurt the merit of living artists: quite the contrary, in my opinion; for I have ever observed, that whatever it be that turns the minds of men to any thing relative to the arts, even the most remotely so, brings artists more and more into credit and repute; and though now and then the mere broker and dealer in such things runs away with a great deal of the profit; yet in the end ingenious men will find themselves gainers, by the dispositions which are nourished and diffused in the world by such pursuits.\* I praise exceedingly your resolution of going on well with those whose practices you cannot altogether approve. There is no living in the world upon any other terms.

“Neither Will nor I were much pleased with your seeming to feel uneasy at a little necessary increase of expense on your settling yourself. You ought to know us too well not to be sensible that we think right upon these points. We wished you at Rome, that you might cultivate your genius by every advantage which the place affords, and to stop at a little expense, might defeat the ends for which the rest were incurred. You know we desired you at parting never to scruple to draw for a few pounds extraordinary, and directions will be given to take your drafts on such occasions. You will judge yourself of the propriety, but by no means starve the cause. Your father wrote to me some time ago. The old gentleman seems to be uneasy at not hearing from you. I was at some distance in the country, but Mr. Bourke opened the letter, and gave him such an account as he could. You ought from time to time to write to him. And pray let *us* hear from you. How goes on your Adam and Eve? Have you yet got your chest? Adieu!—let us hear from you, and believe us all most truly and heartily yours.”

If these letters exhibit the writer's knowledge of the arts, sincerity of regard, wisdom of remark upon every subject he touches, and generous delicacy of conduct in taking off as much as he could the feeling of dependence from the mind of the painter by veiling the patron under the friend, the following is perhaps still more admirable for its keen estimate of the importance of temper and conduct to all men—for teaching the truest wisdom in the practical business of living, not merely in the world, but with the world. The occasion was the froward temper of Barry, involving him in frequent squabbles with his brethren at Rome; and it should be read by every wayward and contentious man the moment he rises in the morning, and before he retires to rest at night. It

\* Daily observation shows the truth of this sagacious remark.

displays also, in a peculiar degree, the same prophetic sagacity which so often distinguished Mr. Burke; the prediction as to what the fate of the artist would be if he did not correct his peculiarities being literally verified.

Gregories, Sept. 16, 1769.

“ My dear Barry,

“ I am most exceedingly obliged to your friendship and partiality, which attributed a silence very blameable on our parts to a favourable cause; let me add in some measure to its true cause, a great deal of occupation of various sorts, and some of them disagreeable enough.

“ As to any reports concerning your conduct and behaviour, you may be very sure they could have no kind of influence here; for none of us are of such a make as to trust to any one's report for the character of a person whom we ourselves know. Until very lately, I had never heard any thing of your proceedings from others; and when I did, it was much less than I had known from yourself, that you had been upon ill terms with the artists and virtuosi in Rome, without much mention of cause or consequence. If you have improved these unfortunate quarrels to your advancement in your art, you have turned a very disagreeable circumstance to a very capital advantage. However you may have succeeded in this uncommon attempt, permit me to suggest to you, with that friendly liberty which you have always had the goodness to bear from me, that you cannot possibly have always the same success, either with regard to your fortune or your reputation. Depend upon it, that you will find the same competitions, the same jealousies, the same arts and cabals, the emulations of interest and of fame, and the same agitations and passions here that you have experienced in Italy; and if they have the same effect on your temper, they will have just the same effects upon your interest; and be your merit what it will, you will never be employed to paint a picture. It will be the same at London as at Rome; and the same in Paris as in London; for the world is pretty nearly alike in all its parts: nay, though it would perhaps be a little inconvenient to me, I had a thousand times rather you should fix your residence in Rome than here, as I should not then have the mortification of seeing with my own eyes a genius of the first rank lost to the world, himself, and his friends, as I certainly must, if you do not assume a manner of acting and thinking here, totally different from what your letters from Rome have described to me.

“ That you have had just subjects of indignation always, and of anger often, I do no ways doubt; who can live in the world without some trial of his patience? But believe me, my dear Barry, that the arms with which the ill dispositions of the world are to be combated, and the qualities by which it is to be reconciled to us, and we reconciled to it, are moderation, gentleness, a little in-

dulgence to others, and a great deal of distrust of ourselves; which are not qualities of a mean spirit, as some may possibly think them; but virtues of a great and noble kind, and such as dignify our nature as much as they contribute to our repose and fortune; for nothing can be so unworthy of a well-composed soul, as to pass away life in bickerings and litigations, in snarling and scuffling with every one about us.

“Again and again, my dear Barry, we must be at peace with our species; if not for their sakes, yet very much for our own. Think what my feelings must be, from my unfeigned regard, and from my wishes that your talents might be of use, when I see what the inevitable consequences must be, of your persevering in what has hitherto been your course, ever since I knew you, and which you will permit me to trace out for you beforehand.

“You will come here; you will observe what the artists are doing; and you will sometimes speak a disapprobation in plain words, and sometimes by a no less expressive silence. By degrees you will produce some of your own works. They will be variously criticized: you will defend them; you will abuse those that have attacked you; expostulations, discussions, letters, possibly challenges, will go forward; you will shun your brethren, they will shun you. In the meantime, gentlemen will avoid your friendship, for fear of being engaged in your quarrels; you will fall into distresses which will only aggravate your disposition for farther quarrels; you will be obliged for maintenance to do any thing for any body; your very talents will depart for want of hope and encouragement; and you will go out of the world fretted, disappointed, and ruined.

“Nothing but my real regard for you could induce me to set these considerations in this light before you. Remember, we are born to serve and to adorn our country, and not to contend with our fellow-citizens, and that in particular your business is to paint and not to dispute. . . .

“If you think this a proper time to leave Rome (a matter which I leave entirely to yourself), I am quite of opinion you ought to go to Venice. Further, I think it right to see Florence and Bologna; and that you cannot do better than to take that route to Venice. In short, do every thing that may contribute to your improvement, and I shall rejoice to see you what Providence intended you, a very great man. This you were, in your *ideas*, before you quitted this; you best know how far you have studied, that is, practised the mechanic; despised nothing till you had tried it; practised dissections with your own hands, painted from nature as well as from the statues, and portrait as well as history, and this frequently. If you have done all this, as I trust you have, you want nothing but a little prudence, to fulfil all our wishes. This, let me tell you, is no small matter; for it is impossible for you to find any persons any where more truly interested for you; to



these dispositions attribute every thing which may be a little harsh in this letter. We are, thank God, all well, and all most truly and sincerely yours. I seldom write so long a letter. Take this as a sort of proof how much I am, dear Barry,

“ Your faithful friend

“ and humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.”

## CHAPTER V.

Mr. Burke and Sir William Bagott—Mr. Fox—Pamphlet on the Discontents—Parliamentary Business—Visit to France—Character of the House of Commons—Mr. Burke's argument against taxing Irish Absentees—Letter to General Lee—Speech of the 19th of April, 1774—Goldsmith—Ill-humour of Barry—Johnson and Burke—Election for Bristol.

THE address, in reply to the speech from the throne, the City remonstrance to the King, the affairs of Mr. Wilkes, and the discontents which generally prevailed, brought Mr. Burke forward almost daily in the session commencing 9th January, 1770.

The debate of the first day, in which he took a leading part, occupied twelve hours; and the second called forth an animated defence of his friend Sir George Saville, from the censures of General Conway, for the alleged violence of his expressions in debate.

His most distinguished exertions during the session besides these, were on the 24th January, for a redress of grievances previous to granting a supply: on the 15th March, regarding the famous address, remonstrance, and petition of the City of London to the King, which he discussed with moderation and temper, aiming to apologize for the warmth of the popular feeling: on the 28th March, in favour of the bounty on the exportation of corn: on the 30th March, in support of Mr. Grenville's bill for regulating the trials of controverted elections, when he was represented by the writers of the time as having on these occasions spoken “inimitably well.”

On the 8th May, he moved eight resolutions, which were supported by Mr. G. Grenville, relating to the disorders in North America, which were meant to censure the plan, or rather, as he said, the unhappy want of plan, of Ministers, in conducting the affairs of that country; and introduced by a speech reported by contemporary opinion, to be “full of sound argument, and infinite wit and raillery.” In fact, all his exertions were characterized as being of this description, though from the little attention then paid to reporting, or rather the hostility of the House at that time

to the publication of their debates, the particulars, like those of other speeches, are not given, or given so meagrely as to afford little idea of what they were in delivery.

A tolerable criterion of the powers of a speaker in the House of Commons is the degree of abuse cast upon him by anonymous writers in the interest of the opposite party; and of this ungracious species of reputation, to which allusion has been already made, he had no ordinary share. The prejudice which it occasionally created against him, even among persons who ought to have known better, may be judged of from the following circumstance:—

In the debate on the third reading of Mr. Grenville's bill for regulating controverted elections, which Lord North, Mr. Fox, and the Ministry, opposed, Sir William Bagott, who usually voted with the latter, said he must, on that measure, side with Opposition; but not from the slightest partiality to that body, for its whole system, in his opinion, went to wound the constitution through the sides of the Ministry; and he concluded by insinuating something about the body with which he was chiefly connected (the country gentlemen) being the only one of real importance or consideration in that House, and to whom the first and chief attention should be paid.

Mr. Burke, as the mouth of his party, was not likely to let such declarations escape without notice. He entered on a vigorous defence of his friends, and drew a fine distinction between faction, and the opposition of party founded on principle. He proceeded to show that Parliament was not meant to be a representation of the landed property only, as the preceding speaker seemed to believe, but of the commercial interest in an equal or still greater degree, as appeared from the establishment of so many boroughs—essential parts of that representation, existing in times earlier than any annals or history can give testimony of: also, that there never was any parliament from which the learned gentlemen of the long robe were excluded, except that one, infamous to a proverb, in the appellation which it acquired of *parliamentum indoctum*. He went on to compare the benefit derived to society from the unactuated load of landed abilities, which descended from generation to generation in the useless members of the community, and that derived from the acquirements, improvements, and activity of mental abilities; and showed that either might be pernicious, yet that both were of real benefit wherever and whenever they mixed, but always more so when acting in aid of each other.

The wit with which this topic was handled, as well perhaps as the general tone of the argument, irritated Sir William to a violent degree, insomuch that he went down to the House two days after, and gave loose to a most unmeasured invective against what he termed his "traducer," designating him indirectly a "black Jesuit," "a pupil of St. Omer's," fit to be "secretary to an Inqui-

sition for burning heretics." Mr. Burke, who on these occasions preserved great equanimity of temper, smiled frequently during this tirade; and on its conclusion, assailed him again with a torrent of ridicule, which it is said the baronet never forgave, particularly when, from the day on which the contest took place, he was afterwards, for a time, nick-named "Burke's April-fool."

On another occasion, a considerable time after this, Sir William preserved more temper, and came off with better success. Mr. Burke having spoken at considerable length, made a long pause, a thing very unusual with him, which induced the baronet, who rose to follow him in the debate, to think he had ended.—"Sir, I have not yet concluded," said Mr. Burke—"I beg pardon," replied Sir William, with good humour, "but the honourable member can make allowance for the mistakes of a country gentleman;" adding with great happiness, a Latin quotation, to the effect, that being no more than a rustic, he conceived the stream of eloquence had ceased, but though it seemed wholly inexhaustible, it might probably prove tiresome.—It frequently happened, however, that the baronet came under the sarcastic lash of Mr. Burke.

Sir William Bagott indeed was not the only one who thought that the importance and wisdom of a senator ought to depend on the amount of the stake he possesses in the land. Lord Crewe was accustomed to tell a pleasant story of a very opulent Liverpool trader, who, having invested a large sum in the purchase of estates, expressed the height of his ambition to be to have a park as large as that of the Duke of Bedford. Calling upon his lordship one day, at a time when from some matter of political interest Mr. Burke's name was on every tongue, and in every newspaper, he exclaimed in a broad, vulgar, self-sufficient manner—"And after all, who is this Mr. Burke, my Lord, that they make such a fuss about? Why, he's nobody.—*He has'nt got our number of acres*, my Lord."

A circumstance, which subsequent events made of interest, took place in the debate on the address this session, when Mr. Charles Fox, in his first parliamentary essay, attempting to answer the objections of the Rockingham party, had some of his arguments successfully turned into ridicule by its leader. No offence was taken by the young orator. He had been taught some time before, by the literary society at his father's table, to think highly of the talents of Mr. Burke. He had known him personally since 1766, and they had been intimate for about two years; and further acquaintance insured to the latter that admiration from his younger friend, which all who knew him intimately involuntarily felt. From an admirer of Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox became his disciple, from his disciple his coadjutor, from his coadjutor his amicable rival for fame; until at length, by the occurrence of extraordinary and unlooked-for events, he terminated as he began his career, his opponent.



Of this celebrated man it is unnecessary to say much, and very difficult to draw an impartial character, without giving offence to his friends, or gratifying the spleen of a large body of political adversaries. Of powers the most commanding, and parliamentary talents the most extraordinary, he did not often exemplify, either in public or private life, the possession of that sound prudence and practical wisdom which insure public confidence and reward. Something of this was owing to natural disposition, something perhaps to parental indulgence, which left him in the most critical period of life wholly uncontrolled. His mind, manly even in youth, seemed to have reached maturity at a bound; between the boy and the statesman there was scarcely an interval. But there accompanied this early precocity an utter disregard of self-discipline and control, and an absolute tyranny of the passions over the judgment. The very excess of his dissipated habits, his neglect of the observances of common life, his indifference to private character, which even in his most popular days, made him an object of distrust to the reflecting part of the nation, all indicated an ill-regulated mind. It is said, as an additional proof of it, that he paid very little regard to religion; if so, who but must sincerely regret so great a misfortune? If such be the inevitable result of early debauchery upon the character, it is, indeed, a heavy sentence upon frail humanity.

Yet his virtues were of the first cast. He was affectionate, mild, generous, friendly, and sincere; obscuring his errors so effectually, that scarcely one of his friends could see them, or could for a moment admit the uncharitable interpretation often put upon them by the world. Few men in public life, except perhaps Mr. Burke, have had more political enemies, though in private life perhaps not one; we might be displeased with the politician, but it was scarcely possible to hate the man. There was a good-natured, almost culpable, facility about his character, when popularity was in question, which frequently brought him into the society, and sometimes under the influence of persons, not only of inferior talents, but of questionable principles and views; and though without any community of ill-feeling with these, or with the enemies of our constitution and government, it must be confessed that he occasionally gave such persons his countenance, so as to alarm the more cautious, the more circumspect, or more timid part of the public: but this was one of his many sacrifices to vulgar applause; made at a time when it became necessary to strengthen his few remaining adherents by allies of every description. The same facility made him, in the opinion of many, a dupe to the plausibility of Buonaparte, in 1802 and 1806, and, at the former period, caused him to admit to his table in France a convicted British traitor, fresh from carrying arms against his native country.

The extraordinary powers which he possessed were chiefly

from nature, and he often seemed to depend upon them alone, without consulting the surer guide of experience. He possessed, of course, infinitely more of ingenuity than of knowledge, more of originality of thought than of the fruits of patient research; more of decision than of reflection; he was more acute than discriminating; he was on most public matters self-willed through life, obstinately attached to his own opinions, and undervaluing, though not offensively, those of the rest of mankind. He was heard to say in the earlier part of life, that "he had never wished to do any thing which he did not do," and that "he considered advice an insult to his understanding."

In conversation he was backward and sluggish, seldom rising above mediocrity; in epistolary communication, common-place; in historical writing, neither profound nor original; in debate alone, he often rose above all competition, especially in bursts of indescribable power; but as an orator, taken in the higher and more extended sense of the word, whose outpourings are worthy to live, and must live, in the page of history and in the admiration of posterity, he was on all great occasions much excelled by Burke. He had no command over the passions or imaginations of his hearers, and without this power, an orator never can be at the head of his art. The bent of his mind in politics was to great things rather than to the more common; to what was imposing and theoretically perfect, rather than to what was useful and applicable; he caught eagerly at the bold and the splendid, at daring novelties and plausible generalities, without sufficiently considering, or caring for, the difficulties opposed to their being carried into effect. No one knew men better in every-day life; but he did not so well know *man*, when placed in uncommon and untried situations.

A remarkable distinction between him and Burke was, that the latter, though educated like a philosopher, and often teaching with the wisdom of one, rejected all theory opposed to experience, in treating of the practical business of the state. While Fox, brought up as a man of the world, and always declaiming as such, appeared in practice often inclined to play the mere philosopher. Though equally grand in his views, he had not the same knowledge, the same caution, the same penetration as Burke, to foresee their results. What he clearly saw, no man could better describe, but his eye did not take in the whole moral horizon; he was impatient of that labour of meditation and of calculation which distinguished his celebrated friend and political instructor.

By many persons, his political life has been called a failure, inasmuch as he attained for no time that power for which he had all his life contended:—as the credit of opposing the American war was chiefly due to Burke as principal, and as pointing out the way for him to pursue, and to his constant teaching and prompting on the subject; as on the question of the French Re-

volution, the next great measure of his life, he was overpowered by the superior powers of the latter, both at the moment of contest and ultimately in the more statesman-like views taken of it by his old master:—he was therefore left a leader almost without a party, a general without an army; public opinion having then, and ever since, cast the strongest reflections on his political wisdom and general conduct in that momentous crisis.

Much also has been said of his opposition to the cause of America, to that of the dissenters, to that of Mr. Wilkes, to the rights of Juries, and in fact to every popular topic between the years 1769 and 1774; and of his coalitions, his sacrifices sometimes to popularity, sometimes to obtain party superiority, as indicative of continual inconsistencies of conduct; and that in fact Lord North made him a patriot by dismissing him with circumstances of personal indignity in 1774, from being a Lord of the Treasury.

Let it be remembered, however, that he was then young; neither let us press public men too hardly on the point of seeming inconsistency. They are believed by the people to sin in this respect much more than they themselves can admit, and more than they themselves conscientiously believe; and the reason is, that the change or modification of opinion proceeds in their minds gradually and imperceptibly to its completion, while to the public, who know nothing of the operation going on, it comes suddenly and unexpectedly.

But after all, is there any point on which a statesman may not conscientiously think differently at different times? Is there any one who has all his life, in office and out of office, expressed precisely the same sentiments upon all the same subjects? Is there a man of any description whose opinions, on many topics, have not at some period of his life changed? He who says the contrary deceives himself, or wishes to deceive others. The human mind does not start into maturity at once armed at all points like Minerva from the head of Jupiter; it is progressive in the attainment of wisdom; and though the last actions of our lives may not be the wisest, there is as little doubt that men generally, as they advance in life, become wiser.

The active occupations of Burke in Parliament at this time, and the union of the different branches of the opposition, are alluded to by him in a letter to his cousin, Feb. 8th, 1770, from Fludyer Street, Westminster—

“ My dear Garret,

“ I am much obliged to you for your letter, which I had not time to answer as fully as it deserves. But it came to me in the opening of a very hot and active session; our minority gets strength daily, and uses it hitherto with spirit. If there was any event which could be particularly pleasing or interesting to



you, I would acquaint you with it; but at present nothing is decided. Lord Chatham has appeared again, and with as much splendour as ever. All the parts of the opposition are well united, and go on in concert."

From the contentions of public, to the kindly feelings of private life, it is delightful to follow him; and to omit the following appeal in favour of a poor and distressed, to an angry and richer relative, would be to sin against all the charities of the heart. It is addressed to his cousin Garret, from Gregories, shortly before this time—

"About two months ago your brother James called upon me; until then, I knew nothing of his having been in London. He was extremely poor, in a bad state of health, and with a wife, to all appearance as wretched and sickly as he, and big with child into the bargain. It was evident enough that with his epileptic distemper, he was very unfit to get his bread by hard labour. To maintain them here would be very heavy to me; more indeed than I could bear, with the very many other calls I have upon me, of the same as well as of other kinds. So I thought the better way would be to send them back to their own county, where, by allowing them a small matter, we might enable them to live. My brother was of the same opinion; so we provided them for the journey homewards; and nothing but the hurry I mentioned, prevented my desiring you to give him, on my account, wherewithal to buy some little furniture and a couple of cows. I then thought to have allowed him ten pounds a year. His wife told me that with a little assistance she could earn something; and thus it might be possible for them to subsist.

"This day I got a letter from him, in which the poor man tells me he is more distressed than ever; and that you showed great resentment to him, so far as even to refuse to give him any thing that I should appoint for him. I can readily excuse the first effect of warmth in an affair that must touch you so nearly. But you must naturally recollect that his indigent circumstances, his unfortunate marriage, and the weakness of his mind, which was in a great measure the cause of both, make him a just object of pity, and not of anger; and that his relation to us neither confers on you nor me any right whatsoever to add to his affliction and punishment—but rather calls upon us to do all the little good offices in our power to alleviate his misfortunes.

"A little reflection will make you sensible of this; I therefore wish you would not only give him now six or seven guineas on my account, but that you would, by yourself or some friend, take care that it should be laid out in the manner most beneficial for him, and not entrusted to his own management. If you are not near him, I dare say, Dav. Crotty or Jack Nagle would look to

his settlement. I can have no improper view in this ; no more than in the other affair which I earnestly recommended to you, and offered my assistance to conclude. But you very justly, I suppose, paid no regard to my opinions or wishes ; I hope you will have no reason to be dissatisfied with what you have resolved on that occasion \* \* \* \* \*

“You remember the usual allowance I have made for these two or three years to some poor persons in your county. You will be so obliging to continue it to them according to my plan of last year, which you can refer to or remember. You will not scruple to advance this for me ; and I do not doubt but your good nature will prevail on you to take the trouble.

“As to my farming, I go on pretty well. All my wheat is in the ground this month past ; which is more than some of my neighbours have been able to compass on account of the wetness of the season.”

In this year Mr. Richard Burke revisited Grenada. The domestic affections of Edmund, which were always particularly sensitive and in this instance felt some alarm from the insalubrity of the climate, experienced alleviation in the promising progress of his own son, then at Westminster School, of whom, to the last moment of his life, he was as proud as he was fond. William Burke thus repeats the usual praises of the admiring father, which some of his surviving friends will remember as being even then remarkably warm—“Ned’s little boy is every thing we could wish, good in his person, excellent in temper and disposition, attentive and diligent in his studies beyond his years. He has read Virgil and Horace, and some prose writers. He has gone through about four books of Homer, and is reading Lucian with really a scientific knowledge of Greek.”

A petition to the king from the freeholders of Buckinghamshire, praying for a new parliament, in consequence of the odium excited against the existing one by the decision on the Middlesex election and other unpopular acts, was drawn up and presented by Mr. Burke.

A great effort, tending to the same purpose, and meant to point out the general errors of government, was his famous pamphlet, “Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents,” brought out in this year ; the most masterly thing of the kind in our language, excepting his own work on the French Revolution ; a source of interest and information to every statesman ; and a species of text-book then and at all times for the Whig connexion. It was not merely meant as an occasional piece, but for the instruction of posterity, by the constitutional tendency of its general views, the depth and truth of its observations, which, with the eloquence of the style, impart that conviction of genius and wisdom which we feel in perusing all his works.

In this piece will be found the germ of the leading doctrines

which distinguished him in after-life ; holding a mean between the extremes of what were considered the popular and the Court doctrines. Of Lord Bute he speaks with a candour and moderation which scarcely any other public man thought it necessary to observe ; the attack on the secret manœuvres of the Court, from a statesman labouring for power, indicated an unusual degree of political courage ; nor did some opinions broached by the more democratical writers meet with more ceremonious treatment from him, for which the adherents of ministry on one side, and Mrs. Macaulay of republican notoriety on the other, lost no time in attacking him. Against parliamentary reform he urges very ingenious and very solid objections ; and his defence of party connexions has never been answered ; putting to silence the hitherto common reproach applied to most public characters, of being party-men.

The "False Alarm" by Johnson, on the other side of the question, appeared not only without effect, but when compared with its opponent, to considerable disadvantage. No political feeling interfered with their private friendship. The good offices of both had been exerted towards the end of the preceding year in favour of Baretta, who had been tried for stabbing a man in the Haymarket, by whom he had been attacked ; when in consulting on the best mode of making his defence, Johnson's usual love of dictation, even to Burke, appeared in contradicting him with an undue degree of warmth ; an error, however, which he acknowledged with the same frankness ; for on being reminded of his heat, he said, "It may be so, sir, for Burke and I should have been of one opinion, if we had had no audience."

The session 1770—1771, which opened on the 13th of November of the former year, was a busy and important one, chiefly occupied by domestic matters. Never, perhaps, was party spirit and general disquiet more prevalent in the kingdom except when in a state of actual disturbance ; but of the speeches of Mr. Burke, though continually praised, no full or even tolerably full, report is preserved from his entrance into Parliament until 1774, except, as has been suggested, they be found among the papers of Sir H. Cavendish, who was in the habit of taking pretty copious notes.

One of the first topics on which he dilated, after attacking ministers in the debate on the address, was (27th November) on the power of filing *ex-officio* informations by the Attorney-General, as applied to the case of Almon, who was prosecuted for publishing the letter of Junius to the king, which other booksellers had done with impunity. In this he characterized that writer in terms which first turned from himself the suspicion of being the writer, it not being believed that such a man would descend to praise himself.



“How comes this Junius to have broke through the cobwebs of the law, and to range uncontrolled, unpunished through the land? The myrmidons of the court have been long, and are still, pursuing him in vain. They will not spend their time upon me, or upon you, when the mighty boar of the forest that has broke through all their toils is before them. But what will all their efforts avail? No sooner has he wounded one than he strikes down another dead at his feet. For my own part, when I saw his attack upon the king, I own my blood ran cold. I thought he had ventured too far, and that there was an end of his triumphs; not that he had not asserted many bold truths. Yes, Sir, there are in that composition many bold truths by which a wise prince might profit. It was the rancour and venom with which I was struck. But while I expected from this daring flight his final ruin and fall, behold him rising still higher and coming down souse upon both houses of Parliament. Yes, he made you his quarry, and you still bleed from the effects of his talons. You crouched, and still crouched beneath his rage. Nor has he dreaded the terrors of your brow,\* Sir, for he has attacked even you, and I believe you have no reason to triumph in the encounter. Not content with carrying away our royal eagle in his pounces and dashing him against a rock, he has laid you prostrate, and King, Lords, and Commons thus become but the sport of his fury. Were he a member of this House, what might not be expected from his knowledge, his firmness, and his integrity. He would be easily known by his contempt of all danger, by his penetration, and by his vigour. Nothing would escape his vigilance and activity. Bad ministers could conceal nothing from his sagacity, nor could promises nor threats induce him to conceal any thing from the public.”

Comparing the letters of this writer with the North Briton as to their force of composition and power over the public mind, he termed the latter mere milk and water papers; and, on another occasion, “a mixture of vinegar and water, at once sour and vapid.”

To a motion by Serjeant Glynn for an inquiry into the administration of criminal justice in Westminster Hall, December 6th, he gave his support, yet reprobated the asperity of reproach applied to Lord Mansfield, for which he was called to account in the public journals; and among his papers is the draft of a letter addressed, or meant to be addressed, to one of them in explanation of the principle of the law of libel, and repelling the charge of giving more credit than he deserved to the unpopular Chief Justice of the King's Bench, in the following terms.

“It is not true that Mr. Burke spoke in praise of Lord Mans-

\* Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, who was distinguished by a pair of large black eye-brows.

field. If he had found any thing in Lord Mansfield praiseworthy, I fancy he is not disposed to make an apology to any body for doing justice. Your correspondent's reason for asserting it is visible enough; and it is altogether in the strain of other misrepresentations. That gentleman spoke decently of the judges, and he did no more; most of the gentlemen who debated on both sides held the same language; and nobody will think their zeal the less warm, or the less effectual, because it is not attended with scurrility and virulence."

Two bills, one for ascertaining the rights of electors in choosing their representatives, February 7th; the other those of juries in prosecutions for libel, March 7th, brought him vigorously forward in their favour. The latter, though introduced as Mr. Dowdeswell's, was Mr. Burke's own bill, which Mr. Fox copied nearly to the letter in his bill of 1791, without any acknowledgment; the former even at this time anticipating the public voice of the country by requiring that the jury should be considered judges both of the law and the fact. Fragments of his speeches on these subjects appear in his works.

The affair of Falkland's Islands furnished the theme of several others; one particularly before the Christmas recess, said by the reports of those who heard him to have been "in the highest strain of oratory;" and one in January equally distinguished for sarcastic ridicule; a talent in which he excelled all his contemporaries, and often exerted with striking effect. Opposition were much blamed for their intemperate conduct on this subject, but perhaps without justice; for it is now known that by a secret agreement between Spain and France in 1763, they had become pledged to a war with England to recover their lost credit and territories, whenever their finances permitted; and the necessities of the latter alone prevented the dispute from becoming the ostensible cause of such war at this moment.

To this immediately succeeded the important contest between the House of Commons and the City Magistrates on the question of the printers giving the proceedings in Parliament, which, arising from the cupidity of a few obscure individuals, terminated in securing one of the greatest constitutional privileges gained since the Revolution,—the tacit liberty of publishing the debates.

Mr. Burke embraced the popular side of the question with his accustomed zeal and ability; and when at length the house confessed itself conquered, by adjourning over the day on which Mr. Wilkes was ordered to attend, he did not cease to pursue their resolutions with reproach and ridicule. On the 2nd of April, in company with the Dukes of Portland and Manchester, Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord King, and others, he paid a formal visit to the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver in the Tower. A proposition by Alderman Sawbridge to shorten the duration of Parliaments was with equal decision opposed by him as

inexpedient and uncalled for by the sense of the country; the substance of the speech has a place in his works.

In the spring of the year, Barry, who had executed two or three paintings for his patron while abroad, returned from Italy filled with impressions of the superiority of his art, a strong taste for virtû, and having also unfortunately contracted a more noxious disposition too often imbibed by long residence on the continent—an inclination to Deism. Mr. Burke, with the activity of a true friend, immediately assailed this opinion with the most powerful arguments and a few good books, particularly Bishop Butler's Analogy, and by these means succeeded in fixing the painter's belief in revealed religion. It is a memorable instance of the envenomed spirit abroad against this distinguished man, long afterwards, for his opposition to revolutionary France, that among other slanderous accusations of the day, was that of having been given to deistical raillery.

His acquaintance with Dr. Beattie, who had arrived in London during the summer, preceded by the fame of his "Minstrel," and "Essay on Truth," perhaps incited him more strongly to convince the artist of his error; the latter work he and Johnson praised highly for its support of religion in opposition to the sceptical metaphysics of Hume. Burke's opinion of metaphysicians is given with characteristic force in the letter to a Noble Lord, when speaking of the Philosophers of the National Convention.

"Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician. It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked spirit than to the frailty and passion of a man. It is like that of the principle of evil himself, incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defæcated evil." Beattie's opinion of the science is not more favourable:—"It is the bane of true learning, true taste, and true science; to it we owe all modern scepticism and atheism; it has a bad effect upon the human faculties, and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life."

In September 1771, Goldsmith writing to Mr. Langton, thus alludes to their friend's usual occupation:—"Burke is a farmer, *en attendant* a better place, but visiting about too," and in proof of the orator's farming propensities to which the poet thus alludes, the following scientific passage on bacon and hogs in a letter to his cousin about this time, deserves to be recorded.

"We have had the most rainy and stormy season that has been known. I have got my wheat into ground better than some others; that is about four and twenty acres; I proposed having about ten more, but, considering the season, this is tolerable. Wheat bears a tolerable price, though a good deal fallen: it is forty-two shillings the quarter, that is two of your barrels. Barley twenty-four shillings. Peas very high, twenty-seven to thirty shillings the quarter; so that our bacon will come dear to us



this season. I have put up four hogs. I killed one yesterday which weighed a little more than twelve score. Of the other three, one is now near fifteen score, the other about twelve. I shall put up seven now for pickled pork; these weigh when fit to kill near seven score a piece. To what weight do you generally feed bacon hogs in your part of the country? Here they generally fat them to about fourteen or fifteen score. In Berkshire, near us, they carry them to twenty-five and thirty score.

“I am now going into some new method, having contracted with a London seedsman for early white peas at a guinea a barrel. These I shall sow in drills in February, dunging the ground for them. They will be off early enough to sow turnips. Thus I shall save a fallow without, I think, in the least injuring my ground, and get a good return besides. A crop of such peas will be near as valuable as a crop of wheat; and they do not exhaust the soil; so little, that as far as my experience goes, they are not much inferior to a fallow. I will let you know my success in due time.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I heard not long since from my brother, who was, thank God, very well. Let me hear from you as soon as you can. Whenever I wrote, I forgot to desire you to give a guinea from Larc\* to her father at Killivellen—for my delay be so good to give him half a guinea more.”

The following passage in another letter gives us an idea of the very distant terms he was on with Lord Shelburne, even from their first acquaintance in politics—and this coolness increased as they advanced in their career.

Mr. Garret Nagle, it seems, wished to become agent to some of his Lordship's Irish estates; an office not disdained to be eagerly solicited by many of the country gentlemen of Ireland of our own day, to absentee and even resident noblemen. After stating his inclination to do all in his power for a young relative who wished to go to India; and a long passage on farming affairs, he goes on to say—

“Now I will say a word or two on your own business, concerning the agency you mentioned. Lord Sh. has been for many years very polite to me; and that is all. I have no interest with him whatsoever; for which reason, when I received your letter, I thought it best to speak to Barré who is in close connexion with him. He had not then heard of Parker's death. He told me that he seldom or never interfered in Lord Shelburne's private affairs, and believed that if he should on this occasion, it could have no effect, but he said he would try; and that if there was any prospect of success he would let me know it. He has said nothing to me since.”

Another letter some time subsequent to this, which would

\* One of his servants.

occupy, if transcribed, five or six pages, is wholly filled with farming affairs, more especially on the culture of the turnip, its risks, advantages, and disadvantages. For this detail (he says) he has chosen a wet day, in which he can do nothing out of doors; and being addressed to a farmer, a more appropriate time or topic could not be chosen. From his account it appears he had nearly thirty acres in turnips, and in the preceding year, no less than one hundred and ten loads of natural hay; clover hay, he adds, sold then from thirty to thirty-six shillings the load. The truth of a remark upon cultivation will be immediately recognised by the practical farmer. "I am satisfied that no cheap method of tillage can be a good one. All profit of lands is derived from manure and labour; and neither of them, much less both of them, can be had but at a dear rate. I should not even consider the cheapness of labour in any particular part as a very great advantage. It is something without doubt. But then I have always found that labour of men is nearly in proportion to their pay. Here we are sixpence a day lower than within a few miles of London; yet I look upon the work there to be in effect nearly as reasonable as here; it is in all respects so much better and so much more expeditiously done."

In the month of November, 1771, his acquaintance with American affairs was rewarded by the appointment of Agent to the State of New York, worth nearly 700*l.* per annum, which, though it tended on all future occasions to give him the most correct views of American affairs, diminished perhaps the effect of his oratory in the House, and of his wisdom out of doors, from an illiberal surmise that his advice might not be wholly disinterested. It was of course no gift of Government.

The next session, 1772, was short, and produced little of importance. A petition, February 6th, from 250 clergymen of the Establishment, and several members of the professions of law and physic, praying to be relieved from subscription to the 39 Articles, and called, from their place of meeting, the Feather's Tavern Association, he opposed, in conjunction with ministry, against the opinions of nearly all his own party, on the plea, among other reasons, that while *the associators professed to belong to the Establishment, and profited by it*, no hardship could be implied in requiring some common bond of agreement, such as the subscription in question, among its members.

Acting upon the same principle he ably supported a motion soon afterwards, April 3rd, made to relieve Dissenting Ministers who *neither agreed with the Church, nor participated in its emoluments*, from this test; and it was carried through the Commons by a great majority, though rejected by the Lords. The Royal Marriage Act he opposed. A bill to quiet the possessions of the subject against dormant claims of the Church, introduced the 17th of February, found in him a powerful though unsuccessful advocate,

on the same principle as the *Nullum Tempus Act* against dormant claims of the Crown; fragments of some of these speeches are given in his works. A bill for the Relief of Protestant Dissenters, to whom he always displayed the utmost liberality and regard, being introduced the succeeding session (1773), he supported it in a long and most ably-argued speech, against some petitions of the Methodist body from Chatham, who, though known as schismatics themselves, deprecated indulgence to any others of the same class, and were therefore severely handled by Mr. Burke. His exertions on this and previous occasions touching ecclesiastical matters, exciting some suspicion of his orthodoxy among a few over-zealous Churchmen, the delivery of the following passage in this speech drew very warm and general applause; an outline of the whole, which is well worthy of perusal by those who take an interest in the question, may be seen in his works, vol. x.

“At the same time that I would cut up the very root of Atheism, I would respect all conscience; all conscience that is really such, and which perhaps its very tenderness proves to be sincere. I wish to see the Established Church of England great and powerful; I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness; I would have her head raised up to that Heaven to which she conducts us. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension, but I would have no breaches in her wall; I would have her cherish all those who are within, and pity all those who are without; I would have her a common blessing to the world, an example, if not an instructor, to those who have not the happiness to belong to her; I would have her give a lesson of peace to mankind, that a vexed and wandering generation might be taught to seek for repose and toleration in the maternal bosom of Christian charity, and not in the harlot lap of infidelity and indifference. Nothing has driven people more into that house of seduction than the mutual hatred of Christian congregations. Long may we enjoy our Church under a learned and edifying episcopacy.”

He also took a considerable share in Colonel Burgoyne's motion, April 3d, for a select committee on East India affairs; and again, April 13th, in a committee of the whole House, on a series of resolutions moved by Mr. Pownall, to regulate the importation and exportation of corn; a matter upon which he seems to have had as clear views as the political economists of the present day, though neither he nor they have had the good fortune to persuade the country gentlemen to adopt the same opinions. The following is part of an eulogium passed upon his speech at the time:—

“He then replied to the several doubts and difficulties which had been raised, in an excellent speech, full of that knowledge which he possesses of these matters; and explained with that



clearness of which he is master, the effects both of supply and trade; and showed the united interests of the landed and commercial parts of this country: that nothing would be more detrimental than their jealousies of each other; and, on the contrary, nothing so advantageous, generally and individually, as their united efforts for their mutual benefit."

On the budget, discussed May 1st; on a bill to regulate the internal government of the African Company; and on some amendments made by the Lords in a money clause in the corn bill, he also took part, lamenting, on the latter occasion, a violent disagreement which had taken place between the Houses, and pointing out forbearance and temper to the Commons as the most dignified mode of reply to the insults received from the peers. The bill itself, as infringing upon the rights of the House in money matters, was tossed over the table, and kicked by members on both sides of the question along the floor as they went out.

Mr. Boswell, in his amusing volumes, records that Dr. Johnson, in conversation, once made a gross *bull*; and, as a faithful chronicler, it must not be concealed by the present writer that Mr. Burke, in the debate on the budget this year, used the same figure of speech, to the great amusement of the House; having however the pleas of his *country*, and the heat of argument, to urge in extenuation of this slip of the tongue.

"The Minister," said he, "comes down in state, attended by his creatures of all denominations, beasts clean and unclean; for the treasury, as it has been managed of late, is worse than Noah's ark. With such however as they are, he comes down, opens his budget, and edifies us all with his speech. Well; he sits down. What is the consequence? *One half* of the House goes away. A gentleman on the opposite side gets up and harangues on the state of the nation; and in order to keep matters even, *another half* retires at the close of his speech. A third gentleman follows their example, and rids the House of *another half* (a loud laugh through the House). "Sir," said he, turning the laugh with some address and humour, "I take the blunder to myself, and express my satisfaction at having said any thing that can put the House in good humour."

In the summer, and again in 1773, he visited France, where Maria Antoinette appeared in that glow of splendour and of youthful beauty which, when afterwards depicted by his pen, drew the compassion and sympathies of Europe. All the chief of those coteries, since so much celebrated in literary history, were opened to receive him, but their prevailing spirit, in politics as well as in religion, excited in his mind a strong degree of aversion, and he formed but few acquaintances at this time, some of whom were among the ecclesiastics.

Never perhaps were there seen together in one capital, at one time, so many men, and even women, of extraordinary intellectual

powers. But the lustre which they cast upon every department of science and literature, was scarcely more remarkable than the perversion of mind which led them to despise the first and greatest bonds which hold society together. They valued every thing but religion; they practised every thing but morality; infidelity and vice were the only links of union; and the mass, splendid as it was, formed but a species of moral dung-heap, rotten and stinking at heart, but luminous on the surface by the very excess of its putrefaction.

Mr. Burke felt alarm and disgust at what he saw, particularly as this union against morals seemed backed by an equal antipathy to all existing institutions of their own country. In the very next session of Parliament he pointed out "this conspiracy of Atheism to the watchful jealousy of governments; and though not fond of calling in the aid of the secular arm to suppress doctrines and opinions, yet if ever it was raised it should be against those enemies of their kind, who would take from man the noblest prerogative of his nature, that of being a religious animal. Already under the systematic attacks of these men I see many of the props of good government beginning to fail. I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration, and make virtue herself less than a name:" memorable words, indeed, when we remember their literal fulfilment.

Nearly the whole of the next session (1772—1773) except an animated speech on the navy estimates, and that on the relief of Protestant dissenters just alluded to, was occupied in discussing the affairs of the East India Company, in which the labour of Mr. Burke in debate, and the extent of his acquaintance with the subject, were avowed by some of the Directors, Members of the House, to be very honourable to his industry. A commission of supervision was at length ordered to be sent out, against all the efforts of Opposition, though Lord North did not hesitate to profit by a variety of other suggestions thrown out by Mr. Burke, its leader: he always professed admiration of his talents, and, it was more than once said, would have been glad to secure his assistance, or his silence, on any terms that he chose to propose. It is certain that a short time before this, a question was put to Mr. Burke, through some of the leading people at the India House, whether he was willing to go out at the head of a commission for revising the whole interior administration of India. The bait, which was tempting even to a man of the most sturdy integrity, insured to him wealth without requiring any renunciation of party connexion; but, again, his personal, and, what he thought more of, his family interests, were sacrificed to unbending principle.

"I attest Heaven and earth," said he, in debate at the time, "that in all places, and at all times, I have steadfastly shoved aside the gilded hand of corruption, and endeavoured to stem the torrent which threatens to overwhelm this island;" adding, on

another occasion—"I know the political map of England as well as the Noble Lord (North), or as any other person; and I know that the way I take is not the path to preferment."

"I know indeed," said he, in the first debate on the affairs of the Company (Dec. 7, 1772), "that the same qualifications now-a-days make a good Member of Parliament, that formerly made a good monk. '*Tria faciunt monachum—Bene loqui de superiore—legere breviarum taliter qualiter—et sinere res vadere ut vadunt.*' In English—Speak well of the Minister—Read the lesson he sets you, *taliter qualiter*, and let the state take care of itself—*sinere res vadere ut vadunt.*" This irreverent allusion to so essential a part of Popery, might almost have satisfied Sir William Bagott himself of the little respect for its forms entertained by the speaker.

The hold which he had acquired of public opinion, and the lead which he had taken in the popular branch of the Legislature, were the best evidences of his importance and powers, considering that in the latter no favour, and scarcely even toleration, is given to any man who does not by unquestioned talents conquer his way to it.

The House of Commons is in many respects an extraordinary assembly. It is not only the leading branch of the Legislature, the immediate organ and purse-bearer of the people, the jealous guardian of the Constitution, the chosen temple of fame, as Burke himself termed it, the main avenue to honours and power, but it is especially the great touchstone of talents for public business. A man may often deceive himself, or mislead others, on the real extent of his abilities for such employment, but he can rarely impose upon this body; few know of what they are capable when they enter into it, and few come out without having found their just weight in the political balance. It does not therefore merely serve to make a man great, but if he be really deficient in the qualities of a great statesman, it is sure to render him little; elsewhere it may be difficult to draw this invidious distinction; but there it is done silently though effectually.

It is in vain, from the number of penetrating eyes, quick ears, emulative and jealous feelings, subtle and powerful understandings directed to all the proceedings of a member, that incapacity can hope to escape detection, or mediocrity seize the palm of excellence. A dull man will soon be neglected, a superficial one seen through, a vain one laughed at, and an ignorant one despised. There is, perhaps, no earthly ordeal for statesmen so trying as this; and no abilities which, by passing through it with celebrity, may not be taken as sterling.

But in addition to these, it serves other useful purposes; it is the great purger and purifier of opinions. No person of moderate capacity desirous of being instructed, or of gaining from the experience of older senators what they have partly gained from their predecessors, can sit there long without being wiser, or, if not,



the presumption is against his understanding. If he be at all open to conviction new lights will break in upon him on most subjects of dispute; his prejudices, his pre-conceived and imperfect notions, will be one by one removed, to be re-arranged in more perfect combinations elaborated in this school of practical wisdom.

Nor is it less serviceable as the scourge of political quackery; for a conceited or turbulent man, who may assume a high tone with the public at large, on the infallibility of his remedies for the national evils, no sooner goes there than he sinks into insignificance. The decorum, and the awe inspired by the place, commonly strike him dumb, and while silent he is safe; but if once tempted to give vent to his crudities, he is instantly assaulted by the united powers of eloquence, argument, and ridicule; and beaten, if not out of the House, at least out of notice. Presumption and dogmatism, on public topics, deserve and meet with no mercy there; and schemes, which for a time mislead even sensible men out of doors, are no sooner touched by the Ithuriel's spear of the House of Commons, than their folly or mischief becomes evident. Yet persons are sometimes found even there wholly incurable; impenetrable to reasoning and insensible to contempt, to whom the knife and the cautery are applied in vain; but the exceptions only prove the rule.

A tax on absentees, proposed in the Irish Parliament at this time by Mr. Flood, then a Member of that Administration, and approved by Ministry in England, drew an able letter, now inserted in his works, from Mr. Burke to Sir Charles Bingham, in Dublin, who had expressly written for his opinion on the subject. This opinion proved decidedly against it. Lord Charlemont, and other friends to the proposal, were pretty well converted by his arguments; and being seconded by a representation to Lord North from some of the chief proprietors resident in England, on the injustice of the measure, caused it to be abandoned.

His arguments on this question appear so forcible that perhaps they are not to be answered, at least the writer never has seen any serious attempt to refute them. Absenteeism is an old grievance of Ireland; and at the present moment the cry against it being stronger perhaps than ever, this letter is well worthy of consideration, as proving that whatever be the remedy for the evil, a direct tax of ten per cent. on non-resident landlords, as was then proposed, is not the most eligible. Some of the points to which he adverts may be quoted—

“Do you, or does any Irish gentleman think it a mean privilege, that, the moment he sets his foot upon this ground, he is, to all intents and purposes, an Englishman? You will not be pleased with a law, which by its operation tends to disqualify you from a seat in this Parliament; and if your own virtue or fortune, or if that of your children, should carry you or them to it, should

you like to be excluded from the possibility of a peerage in this kingdom? If in Ireland we lay it down as a maxim, that a residence in Great Britain is a political evil, and to be discouraged by penal taxes, you must necessarily reject all the privileges and benefits which are connected with such a residence.

“I can easily conceive, that a citizen of Dublin, who looks no further than his counter, may think, that Ireland will be repaid for such a loss by any small diminution of taxes, or any increase in the circulation of money, that may be laid out in the purchase of claret or groceries in his corporation. In such a man an error of that kind, as it would be natural, would be excusable. But I cannot think, that any educated man, any man who looks with an enlightened eye on the interest of Ireland, can believe, that it is not highly for the advantage of Ireland, that this Parliament which, whether right or wrong, whether we will or not, will make some laws to bind Ireland, should always have in it some persons who, by connexion, by property, or by early prepossessions and affections, are attached to the welfare of that country.

“I am so clear upon this point, not only from the clear reason of the thing, but from the constant course of my observation, by now having sat eight sessions in Parliament, that I declare it to you, as my sincere opinion, that (if you must do either the one or the other) it would be wiser by far, and far better for Ireland, that some new privileges should attend the estates of Irishmen, Members of the two Houses here, than that their characters should be stained by penal impositions, and their properties loaded by unequal and unheard of modes of taxation. I do really trust that, when the matter comes a little to be considered, a majority of our gentlemen will never consent to establish such a principle of disqualification against themselves and their posterity, and for the sake of gratifying the schemes of a transitory Administration of the Cockpit or the Castle, or in compliance with the lightest part of the most vulgar and transient popularity, fix so irreparable an injury on the permanent interest of their country.

“This law seems, therefore, to me to go directly against the fundamental points of the legislative and judicial constitution of these kingdoms, and against the happy communion of their privileges. But there is another matter in the tax proposed, that contradicts as essentially a very great principle necessary for preserving the union of the various parts of a state; because it does, in effect, discountenance mutual intermarriage and inheritance; things that bind countries more closely together than any laws or constitutions whatsoever. Is it right that a woman, who marries into Ireland, and perhaps well purchases her jointure or her dower there, should not, after her husband's death, have it in her choice to return to her country and her friends without being taxed for it?

“If any Irish heiress should marry into an English family, and that great property in both countries should thereby come to be



united in this common issue, shall the descendant of that marriage abandon his natural connexion, his family interests, his public and his private duties, and be compelled to take up his residence in Ireland? Is there any sense or any justice in it, unless you affirm, that there should be no such intermarriage, and no such mutual inheritance between the natives? Is there a shadow of reason, that, because a Lord Rockingham, a Duke of Devonshire, a Sir George Saville, possess property in Ireland, which has descended to them without any act of theirs, they should abandon their duty in Parliament, and spend the winters in Dublin? or, having spent the session in Westminster, must they abandon their seats and all their family interests in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and pass the rest of that year in Wicklow, in Cork, or Tyrone?

“See what the consequences must be from a municipal Legislature considering itself as an unconnected body, and attempting to enforce a partial residence. A man may have property in more parts than two of this empire. He may have property in Jamaica and North America, as well as in England and Ireland. I know some that have property in all of them. What shall we say to this case? After the poor distracted citizen of the whole empire has, in compliance with your partial law, removed his family, bid adieu to his connexions, and settled himself quietly and snug in a pretty box by the Liffey, he hears that the Parliament of Great Britain is of opinion, that all English estates ought to be spent in England, and that they will tax him double if he does not return.

“Suppose him, then (if the nature of the two laws will permit it) providing a flying camp, and dividing his year, as well as he can, between England and Ireland, and at the charge of two town houses, and two country houses, in both kingdoms; in this situation he receives an account, that a law is transmitted from Jamaica, and another from Pennsylvania, to tax absentees from these provinces, which are impoverished by the European residence of the possessors of their lands. How is he to escape this ricochet cross-firing of so many opposite batteries of police and regulation? If he attempts to comply, he is likely to be more a citizen of the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea, than of any of these countries. The matter is absurd and ridiculous; and while ever the idea of mutual marriages, inheritances, purchases, and privileges subsist, can never be carried into execution with common sense or common justice.

“I do not know how gentlemen of Ireland reconcile such an idea to their own liberties, or to the natural use and enjoyment of their estates. If any of their children should be left in a minority, and a guardian should think, as many do (it matters not whether properly or no), that his ward had better be educated in a school or university here, than in Ireland, is he sure that he can justify the bringing a tax of ten per cent., perhaps twenty, on his pupil's estate, by giving what, in his opinion, is the best education in



general, or the best for that pupil's particular character and circumstances? Can he justify his sending him to travel, a necessary part of the higher style of education, and, notwithstanding what some narrow writers have said, of great benefit to all countries, but very particularly so to Ireland? Suppose a guardian, under the authority or pretence of such a tax of police, had prevented our dear friend Lord Charlemont from going abroad, would he have lost no satisfaction? Would his friends have lost nothing in the companion? Would his country have lost nothing in the cultivated taste with which he has adorned it in so many ways? His natural elegance of mind would undoubtedly do a great deal; but I will venture to assert, without the danger of being contradicted, that he adorns his present residence in Ireland much the more for having resided a long time out of it.

“Will Mr. Flood himself think he ought to have been driven by taxes into Ireland, whilst he prepared himself, by an English education, to understand and to defend the rights of the subject in Ireland, or to support the dignity of Government there, according as his opinions, or the situation of things, may lead him to take either part, upon respectable principles? I hope it is not forgot, that an Irish Act of Parliament sends its youth to England for the study of the law, and compels a residence in the inns of court here for some years. Will you send out with one breath, and recall with another? This Act plainly provides for that intercourse, which supposes the strictest union in laws and policy, in both which the intended tax supposes an entire separation.”

The general insubordination to all lawful authority at Boston, and the destruction of the tea sent thither because it was to pay duty, made the session of 1774 an important one, from the measures adopted by Ministry against the refractory port and province of Massachuset. A general feeling prevailed here, even among many members of Opposition, that some punishment was necessary. Mr. Burke, however, though unsupported by his party, declared decidedly against the Boston Port Bill, deprecating it in the most solemn manner, as partial, severe, unjust towards the innocent, fraught with danger to our authority, and threatening to bring the question of force at once to issue: “Never,” said he, “did any thing give me more heart-felt sorrow than the present measure.” And it proved, as he expected it would, the great turning point of American politics; but, strange to say, scarcely another man of talents in the House viewed the proceeding with the same alarm that he did; another most memorable instance of his profound political penetration.

His private letters at all times speak nearly the same language as his public speeches, and the sprinkling of American politics, as well as the allusion to the harshness shown towards Dr. Franklin before the Privy Council, contained in the following letter of Mr. Burke to the famous general Lee, then in the colo-

nies, but not yet suspected of intending to join their cause, will not be thought uninteresting—

“ Dear Sir,

“ I received two letters from you ; one by Mr. Hay, the other by the packet. I thank you most sincerely for both.—Your first was particularly acceptable, as it gave me an opportunity of renewing and improving my acquaintance with a gentleman for whose character I have always had an high esteem. My particular friends were the first who took notice of his merit. They imagined that they could not do a better service to government in a newly acquired French country than to send them one of the best samples we were able to furnish of plain, manly English sense and integrity. I wish those who rule at present may show by the provision they make for him here, that such qualifications are still in some request among ourselves.

“ It was extremely kind of you to remember your friends in our dull worn-out hemisphere, among the infinite objects of curiosity that are so exuberantly spread out before you in the vast field of America. There is indeed abundant matter, both natural and political, to give full scope to a mind active and enterprising like yours ; *where so much has been done and undone ; and where still there is an ample range for wisdom and mistake ;*—either must produce considerable effects in an affair of such extent and importance. *It would be no light mischief, and no trivial benefit.* When one considers what might be done there, it is truly miserable to think of its present distracted condition. But as the errors which have brought things into that state of confusion are not likely to be corrected by any influence of ours upon either side of the water, it is not wise to speculate too much on the subject. It can have no effect but to make ourselves uneasy, without any possible advantage to the public.

“ Here, as we have met, so we continue, in the most perfect repose. It has been announced to us that we are to have no business but the gold coin. This has not appeared as yet ; and if there be nothing further than we hear of intended, it will come on time enough. The politics of the continent which used to engage your attention so much, attracts no part of ours. Whether the American affairs will be brought before us is yet uncertain.

“ Saturday, I heard the Massachusetts petition against their governor and deputy discussed before the council. It was spoken to very ably by the counsel on either side ; by Messrs. Dunning and Lee, for the province ; by Mr. Wedderburn, for the governors. The latter uttered a furious philippic against poor Dr. Franklin. It required all his philosophy, natural and acquired, to support him against it. I hear that the petition will be rejected. The council was the fullest of any in our memory. Thirty-five attended.

“ I hope, as you say nothing of it in your letter, that your fit



of the gout was but gentle, and rather a sharp remedy than any thing that deserves to be called a disease. With many thanks for your obliging remembrance, and all good wishes for your journey and safe return,

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your most obedient and faithful humble servant,  
“EDMUND BURKE.”

“Westminster, Feb. 1, 1774.

“To General Charles Lee, Philadelphia.”

The parliamentary proceedings, in which he took a leading part, were in perpetuating Mr. Grenville's Election Bill, which was strongly, though rather unaccountably opposed; the budget, the Quebec Government Bill, the bills for altering the government of Massachusetts; and the petitions to which they gave rise.

But the distinguishing feature of the session, and the greatest effort of oratory, as it was universally considered, which had hitherto been made in the House of Commons, or in any other popular assembly, was his speech on the 19th of April, on a motion by Mr. Fuller, who usually supported ministry, wholly to repeal the obnoxious tea duty. He did not rise till the evening was advanced, and some members had withdrawn, who, on the report of his unusual brilliancy, hurried back to give frequent and audible testimonies of their admiration of his powers, though they would not give him their votes. The murmurs of applause in the gallery were only restrained from bursting out by awe of the House. It was on this occasion, after the delivery of a particularly powerful passage, that Lord John Townshend, who had retired thither with some friends, exclaimed aloud, “Good God! what a man this is! how could he acquire such transcendent powers?”

The plain, practical, common-sense policy, recommended in the following animated passage, drew from Mr. Sampson, an intelligent American much in the confidence of Dr. Franklin, a loud exclamation to a friend, who sat at a little distance from him in the gallery: “You have got a most wonderful man here; he understands more of America than all the rest of your House put together.”

“Let us, Sir, embrace some system or other before we end this session. Do you mean to tax America, and to draw a productive revenue from her? If you do, speak out; name, fix, ascertain this revenue; settle its quantity; define its objects; provide for its collection; and then fight when you have something to fight for. If you murder—rob; if you kill—take possession; and do not appear in the character of madmen as well as assassins, violent, vindictive, bloody, and tyrannical, without an object. But may better counsels guide you!

“Again and again, revert to your old principles—seek peace



and ensue it; leave America, if she has taxable matter in her, to tax herself.\* I am not here going into the distinctions of rights, nor attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. Let the memory of all actions in contradiction to that good old mode, on both sides, be extinguished for ever. Be content to bind America by laws of trade; you have always done it. Let this be your reason for binding their trade. Do not burthen them with taxes; you were not used to do so from the beginning. Let this be your reason for not taxing. These are the arguments of states and kingdoms. Leave the rest to the schools, for there only they may be discussed with safety. But if intemperately, unwisely, fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source of government by urging subtle deductions, and consequences odious to those you govern, from the unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sovereignty, you will teach them by these means to call that sovereignty itself in question. When you drive him hard, the boar will turn upon the hunters. If that sovereignty and their freedom cannot be reconciled, which will they take? They will cast your sovereignty in your face. No body of men will be argued into slavery. Sir, let the gentlemen on the other side call forth all their ability; let the best of them get up and tell me, what one character of liberty the Americans have, and what one brand of slavery they are free from, if they are bound in their property and industry by all the restraints you can imagine on commerce, and at the same time are made pack-horses of every tax you choose to impose, without the least share in granting them. When they bear the burthens of unlimited monopoly, will you bring them to bear the burthens of unlimited revenue too? The Englishman in America will feel that this is slavery; that it is *legal* slavery, will be no compensation either to his feelings or to his understanding."

The reply to Lord Carmarthen, from its force, beauty, and readiness, excited a great emotion in the House. His Lordship observed, that Manchester not being represented, had as much right to complain as the colonies; and that as our children,

\* The opinion advanced by some persons, of American representatives being sent to the British senate, was scouted by Mr. Burke some years before this time. The writer of Junius's letters fully coincided with him; and in a private letter to Wilkes, Sept. 7, 1771, appeals to his authority on the question, in condemning some resolutions of the Bill of Rights Society. "If you mean that the Americans should be authorized to send their representatives to the British Parliament, I shall be contented with referring you to what Mr. Burke has said upon this subject, and will not venture to add any thing of my own."—*Woodfall's Edition*, vol. i., p. 293.

the Americans, were guilty of the revolting crime of rebellion against their parent:—"True," replied the orator, "they are our children, but when children ask for bread, shall we give them a stone? When they wish to assimilate to their parent, and to reflect with a true filial resemblance the beautiful countenance of British liberty, are we to turn to them the shameful parts of our constitution? Are we to give them our weakness for their strength? Our opprobrium for their glory? And the slough of slavery, which we are not able to work off, to serve them for their freedom?"

The merits of this speech are of a great and peculiar cast; a force and truth of argument, not to be answered—ornament not more than enough—an intuitive, straight-forward wisdom, which, on all great occasions, seems never to have deserted him—a range of observation, which nobody else dare attempt without certain ruin to the speaker and to the subject—yet skilfully brought to bear upon the point he has in view. To this end even his digressions, his illustration, his imagery, his narrative of measures, his exposition of our true policy, his appeals to experience, his graphic sketches of character, all forcibly tend. Nothing that comes in his way but is converted to use; every figure becomes an argument; and when seeming most to wander from the point, he suddenly wheels round and overpowers us with some new and formidable auxiliary to reason. It is, and indeed all his speeches are, a combination of all the constituents of eloquence, such as no other orator, foreign or native, ancient or modern, has been able to give us.

As a ready debater it added to his fame, much of it being unquestionably extemporaneous; it was also the first speech which his friends could persuade him to commit to the press, and for this purpose he had the use of their notes. On the public it made a great impression; the censure of the opposite party was confined more to the manner than to the matter; and Lord North, though he negatived the motion, appeared so confounded or convinced by the reasoning of its supporter, that early in the very next session he offered to repeal this tax, the fatal cause of so much mischief, if that would satisfy America.

About the same time his friend, poor Goldsmith, died, having scarcely finished his pleasant poem of Retaliation, written in reply to some jocular epitaphs upon him, by the club at St. James's Coffee-house, and in which, as one of the number, the character of Mr. Burke, who, with Dr. Johnson, took the trouble to direct his funeral, is spiritedly drawn; though well known to every reader of poetry, it cannot well be omitted in a memoir of him whom it describes. Allowing for that exaggeration and sarcastic pleasantry, which the occasion called for, it would be difficult to comprise more wit and truth in the same number of lines.—

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,  
 We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much ;  
 Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,  
 And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.  
 Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,  
 To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote ;  
 Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
 And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining ;  
 Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,  
 Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit ;  
 For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,  
 And too fond of the right, to pursue the expedient ;  
 In short, 'twas his fate, unemploy'd or in place, Sir,  
 To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

In another part, comparing the different members to dishes, he happily writes—

Our Burke shall be tongue, with the garnish of brains.

In the “ Haunch of Venison ” he again says—

———— but struck one quite dumb,  
 With tidings that Johnson and Burke would not come ;  
 “ For I knew it,” he cried, “ both eternally fail,  
 The one with his speeches, and t’other with Thrale,”

amid other similar allusions.

Of the lively and affectionate interest which Mr. Burke took in the success, both in life and in art, of his protégé, Barry, abundant proofs have been already given ; but he soon saw, with great pain, after the latter had been resident a short time in England, that a peculiar temper and obstinate humours would in all probability mar, if not destroy, the effect of his undoubted talents. With many great and good qualities, few persons among his own art could live with the painter long on terms of amity ; he was eccentric, and self-willed ; and scarcely any man who is so is agreeable to society ; he had a harshness and freedom of expression in matters of opinion, which carried him further than he meant, and frequently gave offence, when perhaps offence was not intended. He had a mode of thinking and of acting of his own in all things ; he had an utter contempt for money, yet became often querulous and irritable at the distresses which money alone could relieve, and felt the want of that consequence which, after all, money is one of the chief means of imparting. He had a great thirst for fame, but would not seek it on the terms which general opinion prescribed ; he thought the world ought to conform to his views, and not he to the world’s ; he would not submit to paint portraits, and was, therefore, pretty certain of never arriving either at popularity or wealth.

A humour of his at this moment, which to some would have appeared like ingratitude, though this was by no means the case, had nearly produced a breach between him and his patron. The latter wished to have his picture painted in order to gratify an old friend ; and calling frequently for this purpose, was always put off



with excuses of prior occupation, or the necessity of receiving previous notice, which it appeared Mr. Burke, from his incessant engagements, was wholly unable to give. The friend in question at length complaining of the delay, the following letter was written to the painter.

“ Sir,

“ I ought to apologize to you, for the liberty I have presumed to take, of troubling you with what I find an unseasonable visit. I humbly beg your pardon for the intrusion. My apology is this: My worthy friend, Dr. Brocklesby, who has honoured me so much as to desire my picture, and wished to have it painted by you, complained to me, yesterday, that he has been two years desiring it without effect. I should be very insensible of this mark of his attention, and very undeserving of it, if I had not endeavoured, as far as in me lay, to obey his obliging commands. I have therefore several times, almost in every week since he first spoke to me (except about two months when I was wholly in the country, without coming to town at all), presented myself to you, that if you were not better engaged I might sit to you. You have always been so much employed, that you have required a day's previous notice of my intention, and for that reason declined to paint the picture at the times which suited me. It has been very unfortunate to me that my time too is so irregularly occupied, that I can never with certainty tell beforehand when I shall be disengaged. No man can be more sensible of the insignificance of my occupations, but to *me* they are of some importance, and the times of them certainly very irregular. I came to town upon very pressing business, at four on Thursday evening; yesterday I had some hours upon my hands; I waited upon you, but I found improperly. Contrary to my expectation, a gentleman, who was to go out of town with me this morning, delays till half an hour after four o'clock; this gave me near five hours to dispose of, and which I was willing to give to my friend's wishes. I waited on you exactly at half an hour after eleven, and had the pleasure of finding you at home; but, as usual, so employed as not to permit you to undertake this disagreeable business. I have troubled you with this letter, as I think it necessary to make an excuse for so frequent and importunate intrusions.

“ Much as it might flatter my vanity to be painted by so eminent an artist, I assure you, that knowing I had no title to that honour, it was only in compliance with that desire (often repeated) of our common friend, that I have been so troublesome. You, who know the value of friendship, and the duties of it, I dare say, will have the goodness to excuse me on that plea. On no other should I deserve it, for intruding on you at other times than those you should please to order. Nobody, I flatter myself, regards that time more; and pays, and has always paid, a more sincere

(though a very unlearned) homage to your great talents and acquirements. I must once more repeat my apology, hoping to obtain your pardon, on the usual plea of not committing the same fault again. I am, with the greatest respect and esteem, Sir, your most obedient,

“ And most faithful humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Saturday, July 9th, 1774.”

Barry, in reply, professed himself much vexed at the misunderstanding, and hurt, by what he considered the sarcastic and ironical air of the letter conveying it, adding in his own defence, that other artists required more notice than that for which he had asked. The rejoinder of Mr. Burke exhibits his usual force and felicity of expression.

“ Sir,

“ I have been honoured with a letter from you, written in a style which, from most of my acquaintances, I should have thought a little singular. In return to an apology of mine for an unseasonable intrusion, couched in language the most respectful I could employ, you tell me that I attack your quiet, and endeavour to make a quarrel with you. You will judge of the propriety of this matter, and of this mode of expression.

“ When I took the liberty of offering myself to sit for my picture on Saturday last, I could not possibly mean to offend you. When you declined the offer in the manner in which you declined offers of the same kind several times before, I confess I felt that such importunity on my part, and on such a subject, must make me look rather little in the eyes of others, as it certainly did in my own. The desire of being painted is one of the modes in which vanity sometimes displays itself. I am however mistaken if it be one of the fashions of that weakness in me. I thought it necessary, on being dismissed by you so often, to make you at length some apology for the frequent trouble I had given you. I assured you that my desire of sitting solely arose from my wish to comply with the polite and friendly request of Doctor Brocklesby. I thought I should be the more readily excused on that account by you, who, as you are a man informed much more than is common, must know that some attention to the wishes of our friend, even in trifles, is an essential among the duties of friendship: I had too much value for Dr. Brocklesby's regard to neglect him even in this trivial article. Such was my apology. You find fault with it; and I should certainly ask your pardon, if I were sensible that it did or could convey any thing offensive.

“ When I speak in high terms of your merit and your skill in your art, you are pleased to treat my commendation as irony. How justly the warm (though unlearned and ineffectual) testimony I have borne to that merit and that skill upon all occasions, calls

for such a reflection, I must submit to your own equity, upon a sober consideration. Those who have heard me speak upon that subject have not imagined my tone to be ironical; whatever other blame it may have merited. I have always thought and always spoke of you as a man of uncommon genius, and I am sorry that my expression of this sentiment has not had the good fortune to meet with your approbation. In future, however, I hope you will at least think more favourably of my sincerity; for if my commendation and my censure have not that quality, I am conscious they have nothing else to recommend them.

“In the latter part of your letter you refuse to paint the picture except upon certain *terms*. These terms you tell me are granted to all other painters. They who are of importance enough to grant terms to gentlemen of your profession may enter into a discussion of their reality or their reasonableness. But I never thought my portrait a business of consequence. It was the shame of appearing to think so by my *importunity* that gave you the trouble of my apology. But that I may not seem to sin without excuse, because with knowledge, I must answer to your charging me, that ‘I well know that much more is required by others,’ that you think far too highly of my *knowledge* in this particular. I know no such thing by any experience of my own. I have been painted in my life five times; twice in little, and three times in large. The late Mr. Spencer and the late Mr. Sisson\* painted the miniatures. Mr. Worlidge and Sir Joshua Reynolds painted the rest. I assure you, upon my honour, I never gave any of these gentlemen any regular previous notice whatsoever.

“They condescended to live with me without ceremony; and they painted me when my friends desired it, at such times as I casually went to admire their performances, and just as it mutually suited us. A picture of me is now painting for Mr. Thrale by Sir Joshua Reynolds; and in this manner, and this only. I will not presume to say that the condescension of some men forms a rule for others. I know that extraordinary civility cannot be claimed as a matter of strict justice. In that view possibly you may be right. It is not for me to dispute with you. I have ever looked up with reverence to merit of all kinds; and have learned to yield submission even to the caprices of men of great parts. I shall certainly obey your commands; and send you a regular notice whenever I am able. I have done so at times; but having been, with great mortification to myself, obliged once or twice to disappoint you, and having been as often disappointed by your engagements, it was to prevent this that I have offered you (I may freely say) every leisure hour that I have had sure and in my own possession, for near two years past. I think a person possessed of the indulgent weakness of a friend, would have given

\* A particular friend of Mr. Burke, and one for whom he entertained a more than common regard.



credit to the irregularity of the calls of my little occupations, on my assuring him so frequently of the fact.

“ There are expressions in your letter of so very extraordinary a nature, with regard to your being free from any misfortune, that I think it better to pass them over in silence. I do not mean to quarrel with you, Mr. Barry; I do not quarrel with my friends. You say a picture is a miserable subject for it; and you say right. But if any one should have a difference with a painter, some conduct relative to a picture is as probable a matter for it as any other. Your demanding an explanation of a letter, which was itself an explanation, has given you the trouble of this long letter. I am always ready to give an account of my conduct. I am sorry the former account I gave should have offended. If this should not be more successful, let the business end there. I could only repeat again my admiration of your talents, my wishes for your success, my sorrow for any misfortune that should befall you; and my shame, if ever so trifling a thing as a business of mine should break in upon any order you have established in an employment to which your parts give a high degree of importance.

“ I am, with the greatest truth and respect, Sir,

“ Your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.”

“ Beaconsfield, July 13, 1774.

This disagreement, arising from the caprice or whim of the painter, soon terminated; the picture was painted, and had the reputation of being an excellent likeness.

Shortly after this, Mr. Burke finding Barry busily at work when he called, inquired the subject, and was told that it was a bagatelle—Young Mercury inventing the lyre, by accidentally finding a tortoise-shell at break of day, on the sea-shore: “ Aye,” replied the orator, with his accustomed promptitude, “ that is the fruit of early rising,—there is the industrious boy!—But I will give you a companion for it—paint Narcissus wasting his day, in looking at himself in a fountain—that will be the idle boy.” The picture was accordingly painted.—In the following year, the artist presented a copy of his *Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England*, to the same great critic, who returned a candid and favourable opinion in the following note, dated January 15th, 1775, from the Broad Sanctuary:—

“ Mr. Burke presents his compliments to Mr. Barry, and is extremely obliged to him for the honour he has done him in his early communication of his most ingenious performance on paintings, from several parts of which he has received no small pleasure and instruction. There are throughout the whole many fine thoughts and observations very well conceived, and very powerfully and elegantly expressed. They would however have ap-

peared with still greater advantage, if Mr. Barry had attended to the methodical distribution of his subject, and to the rules of composition, with the same care with which he has studied and finished several of the particular members of his work.

“According to the natural order, it is evident that what is now the thirteenth chapter, ought to follow immediately after the eighth; and the ninth to succeed to what is now the nineteenth. The subject of religion, which is resumed in the nineteenth chapter, ought more naturally to follow, or to make a part of the ninth, where indeed it is far better (indeed perfectly well) handled; and where, in Mr. Burke’s poor opinion, as much is said upon the subject as it could reasonably bear. The matter in that last chapter is not quite so well digested, nor quite so temperately handled as in the former; and Mr. Burke fears, will not give the satisfaction which the public will receive from the rest. There are a few parts which Mr. Burke could not have understood if he had not been previously acquainted by some gentlemen to whom Mr. Barry had explained them, that they are allusions to certain matters agitated among artists, and satires upon some of them. With regard to the justice or injustice of these strictures (of which there are several in the latter part of the book) Mr. Burke can form no opinion. As he has little or no knowledge of the art, he can be no judge of the emulations and disputes among its professors. These parts may therefore, for aught he knows, be very grateful and possibly useful to the several parties which subsist (if any do subsist) amongst themselves. But he apprehends they will not be equally pleasing to the world at large, which rather desires to be entertained with their works than troubled with their contentions. Whatever merit there may be in these reflections, the style of that part which most abounds with them is by no means so lively, elegant, clear, or liberal as the rest.

“Mr. Burke hopes for Mr. Barry’s obliging and friendly indulgence for his apology for the liberty he has taken in laying before him what seemed to him less perfect in a work, which in general he admires, and is persuaded the world will admire very highly. Mr. Barry knows that objections even from the meanest judges may sometimes be of use to the very best writers, and certainly such little criticisms may be of service on future occasions, if Mr. Barry should continue to oblige the world with further publications on this or any other subject (as there are few to which he is not very equal), and should turn his talents from the practice to the theory and controverted questions of this pleasing art.”

Among the numerous friends who passed a short time at Gregories during the summer, were Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and his old friend Dr. Johnson; when the latter, after wandering one day

over the grounds in admiration, succeeded by a reverie, exclaimed—

Non equidem invideo, miror magis.

Which, by some, has been construed into a passing shadow of discontent, at the superiority of his friend's fortune. Johnson, however, had little of envy about him; and Burke nothing of the insolence of ordinary minds in prosperity, to excite it. For though now the leader of Opposition, the first by far in eloquence in Parliament, second to none in public talents of any kind, high in fame, in confidential connexion and friendship with the chief men of the country, distinctions which operate on the behaviour of most men, they produced in him no alteration of manner whatever. His table, society, and friendship, were as open to his less fortunate acquaintance as before. He had passed them by in the race of life, but did not neglect or despise those of worth or talents because they were nearly lost in the distance.

At the moment of parting, when the hospitable master of the mansion was setting out on election business, another supposed equivocal speech escaped from the moralist as he shook him cordially by the hand.—“Farewell, my dear Sir, and remember that I wish you all the success which ought to be wished you, which can possibly be wished you indeed—by an honest man.” There is nothing ambiguous in this; now and then, it is true, he seemed to think that an honest man could scarcely wish well to a Whig, but *Mund*, as he familiarly called him, seldom came in for any share in this censure. On the contrary, of his public exertions he said, “It was commonly observed, he spoke too often in Parliament, but nobody could say he did not speak well, but perhaps too frequently and sometimes too familiarly.” Such, however, must always be the case with a leader of Opposition, at least as to frequent speaking. Mr. Burke, with equal regard, defended Johnson's pension this session from the attack of one of his own party, Mr. Thomas Townshend, in the House of Commons.

The doctor launching out one day in praise of his friend Burke at Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, an Irish trader who was present, delighted at hearing his countryman so much applauded by one whom he understood to be the wisest man in England, thought he might add something to this favourite subject. “Give me leave, Sir,” said he to Johnson, “to tell you something of Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke went to see the collieries in a distant province; and he would go down, Sir, into the bowels of the earth (in a bag) and he would examine every thing; he went in a bag, Sir, and ventured his life for knowledge; but he took care of his clothes, that they should not be spoiled, for he went down in a bag.” “Well, Sir,” replied Johnson good



humouredly, in allusion to the repetitions of this fact, "if our friend Mund should die in any of these hazardous exploits, you and I would write his life and panegyric together; and your chapter of it should be entitled thus, '*Burke in a bag.*'"

These two remarkable men were perhaps the only persons of their age, who in acquirements or in original powers of mind could be compared with each other; they had been at first fellow-labourers in the literary vineyard; they had each ultimately risen to the highest eminence in different spheres; they preserved at all times sincere esteem for each other; and were rivals only in gaining the admiration of their country. From the first, Burke seems to have possessed a strong ambition of rising in public life far above the range accessible to mere literature, or even to a profession, though that profession was the law. Johnson's views had never extended beyond simple independence and literary fame. The one desired to govern men, the other to become the monarch of their books; the one dived deeply into their political rights, the other into the matter of next importance among all nations—their authors, language, and letters. As a curious physical coincidence, it may be remarked, that both were near-sighted.

A strong cast of originality, yet with few points of resemblance, distinguish not only their thoughts, but almost their modes of thinking, and each has had the merit of founding a style of his own, which it is difficult to imitate. Johnson, seemingly born a logician, impresses truth on the mind with a scholastic, methodical, though commonly irresistible effect. More careless of arrangement, yet with not less power, Burke assumes a more popular manner, giving to his views more ingenuity, more novelty, and on the whole, more variety. The reasoning of the former is marshalled with the exactness of a heraldic procession, or the rank and file of an army, one in the rear of the other according to their importance or power of producing effect. The latter, disregarding such precise discipline, makes up in the incessant and unexpected nature of his assaults, what he wants in more formal array; we can anticipate Johnson's mode of attack, but not Burke's, for, careless of the order of battle of the schools, he charges at once front, flanks, and rear; and his unwearied perseverance in returning to the combat on every accessible point, pretty commonly insures him the victory. The former argued like an academical teacher; the latter like what he was and what nature had intended him for—an orator. The labours of the former were addressed to the closet; of the latter, most frequently to a popular assembly; and each chose the mode best calculated for his purpose.

Both were remarkable for subtlety and vigour of reasoning whenever the occasion required them. In copiousness and

variety of language, adapted to every subject and to every capacity, Burke is generally admitted to possess the advantage; in style he has less stiffness, less mannerism, less seeming labour, and scarcely any affectation; in perspicuity they are both admirable. Johnson had on the whole more erudition; Burke, inexhaustible powers of imagination. Johnson possessed a pungent, caustic wit; Burke, a more playful, sarcastic humour; in the exercise of which both were occasionally coarse enough. Johnson, had his original pursuits inclined that way, would have made no ordinary politician; Burke was confessedly a master in the science; in the philosophy of it he is the first in the English language, or perhaps in any other; and in the practice of it, during the long period of his public career, was second to none. Added to these were his splendid oratorical powers, to which Johnson had no pretension. With a latent hankering after abstractions, the one in logical, the other in metaphysical subtleties, both had the good sense utterly to discard them when treating of the practical business of men.

They were distinguished for possessing a very large share of general knowledge, accurate views of life, for social and conversational powers instructive in no common degree—and in the instance of Johnson never excelled. They understood the heart of man and his springs of action perfectly, from their constant intercourse with every class of society. Conscientious and moral in private life, both were zealous in guarding from danger the established religion of their country; and in the case of Burke, with the utmost liberality to every class of dissenters. Johnson's censures and aversions, even on trifling occasions, were sometimes marked by rudeness and ferocity; Burke, with more amenity of manners and regard to the forms of society, rarely permitted his natural ardour of feeling to hurry him into coarseness in private life; and on public occasions only where great interests were at stake, and where delicacy was neither necessary nor deserved.

Viewed in every light, both were men of vast powers of mind, such as are rarely seen, from whom no species of learning was hidden, and to whom scarcely any natural gift had been denied; who had grasped at all knowledge with avaricious eagerness, and had proved themselves not less able to acquire than qualified to use this intellectual wealth. None were more liberal in communicating it to others, without that affectation of superiority, in Burke at least, which renders the acquisitions of pedants oppressive, and their intercourse repulsive. Whether learning, life, manners, politics, books or men was the subject—whether wisdom was to be taught at once by precept and example, or recreation promoted by amusing and instructive conversation—they were all to be enjoyed in the evening societies of these celebrated friends.

A dissolution of parliament occurring in autumn, and a disagreement with Lord Verney rendering his return for Wendover unlikely, the Marquis of Rockingham offered Mr. Burke his interest in Malton, whither he proceeded and was elected.

While expressing his acknowledgments for this favour, and on the point of sitting down to dinner, a deputation from the merchants of Bristol, who had travelled rapidly to London, and from London to Yorkshire, in search of him, arrived to propose his becoming a candidate for their city, or rather to ask him to accede to his nomination, which had been already made by the leading men there. This, to one who had shown less regard to popularity than prudence demanded, was an unexpected honour. The tender, however, was too handsome to be refused; it was an offering solely to his public merits and commercial knowledge, and the favour was enhanced by the promise of being returned free of expense, an essential consideration to a man of his confined fortune.

Obtaining the ready assent of his Malton friends to this change of destination, he set off at six o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, and travelling night and day, arrived about half-past two on Thursday, the thirteenth of October, and the sixth day of the poll, a distance then of about 350 miles. He drove instantly to the house of the Mayor, but not finding him at home, proceeded to the Guildhall, where, ascending the hustings, and saluting the electors, sheriffs, and the other candidates, he reposed for a few minutes, being utterly exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep, and then addressed the citizens in a speech which met with great and general approbation.

After a contest protracted to the last moment, he was returned on the third of November. In a powerful address of thanks, delivered on the occasion, he exhibited what many thought too rigid a degree of independence on being pressed as to whether he meant to vote in Parliament according to his own opinion, or to the wishes of his constituents. The question at such a moment was vexatious enough, for a negative might imply on his part something like ingratitude; but being above all evasion or temporizing, he respectfully, though firmly, claimed the privilege at all times of following the dictates of his own conscience. His reasons, among the more reflecting class of politicians, have set the question for ever at rest; no one has thought it necessary to add to them, or prudent to answer them; though he complained at the moment of want of time and preparation for the discussion.

“I am sorry I cannot conclude without saying a word on a topic touched upon by my worthy colleague. I wish that topic had been passed by, at a time when I have so little leisure to discuss it. But since he has thought proper to throw it out, I owe you a clear explanation of my poor sentiments on that subject.



“ He tells you that ‘the topic of instructions has occasioned much altercation and uneasiness in this city;’ and he expresses himself, if I understand him rightly, in favour of the coercive authority of such instructions.

“ Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative, to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions to theirs; and above all, ever and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

“ My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours without question ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate and another decide; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

“ To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions; *mandates* issued which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience; these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenour of our constitution.

“ Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different states and with hostile interests; which interests each must maintain as an agent and advocate against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation with *one* interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament. If the local constituent should have an interest, or should form a hasty opinion, evidently opposite

to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far as any other from any endeavour to give it effect."

On another occasion (1780), he told them—"I did not obey your instructions: No. I conformed to the instructions of truth and nature, and maintained your interest, against your opinions, with a constancy that became me. A representative worthy of you ought to be a person of stability. I am to look indeed to your opinions; but to such opinions as you and I *must* look to five years hence. I was not to look at the flash of the day. I knew that you chose me, in my place, along with others, to be a pillar of the state, and not a weather-cock on the top of the edifice, exalted for my levity and versatility, and of no use but to indicate the shiftings of every popular gale."

These speeches being circulated through the country, an unusual thing with election speeches of that day, met with general applause.

A ludicrous anecdote is recorded of his brother candidate, Mr. Cruger, a merchant chiefly concerned in the American trade, who, at the conclusion of one of Mr. Burke's eloquent harangues, finding nothing to add, or perhaps as he thought to add with effect, exclaimed earnestly in the language of the counting-house, "I say ditto to Mr. Burke—I say ditto to Mr. Burke." With such an example before him, however, he must have improved materially in the art of delivering his sentiments in public, for in the succeeding session he spoke on American business several times with sufficient spirit.

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## CHAPTER VI.

Parliamentary Business.—Speech on American Conciliation.—Anecdotes of Drs. Franklin, Priestley, and Mr. Hartley.—Round Robin on Goldsmith's Epitaph.—Epitaph on Mr. Dowdeswell.—Use of a good Speech in Parliament.—Letters to the Sheriffs and two gentlemen of Bristol.—To Lord Charlemont, Barry, Mr. Francis, Mr. Fox, Dr. Robertson.—Speeches on the Address and Employment of the Indians.—Statue proposed in Dublin.—Admiral Keppel.—Letter to Sir William Jones.

IT was the common lot of Mr. Burke, during much of his political life, to see fulfilled in the recess the predictions he had made during the preceding session. So was it with the scheme for shutting up the port of Boston, which more than realized his worst anticipations, by giving birth to that concentration of the most turbulent spirits of the colonies into a congress, where almost at their first meeting, and wholly unknown to their constituents, was laid the plan of total separation from the mother-country.

A variety of petitions from the merchants and manufacturers, deprecating hostilities, flowed into the House of Commons, which were strenuously though ineffectually seconded by the Member for Bristol; being referred, not to a political committee, as he wished, but to a commercial one, which was wittily called by him, and afterwards generally known, as the Committee of Oblivion, from nothing having transpired from it.

The reports which exist of four or five of the speeches on these petitions, though extremely scanty, give some idea of the vehemence with which he opposed the hostile spirit toward America, and the variety of matter he brought to bear upon the question.

In concluding an animated harangue (26th of Jan.) he used a beautiful illustration, which drew great applause, of an archer about to direct an arrow to the heart of his enemy, but found that in his adversary's arms was enfolded his own child. This incident he recommended with cautionary admonition to those statesmen who had in contemplation the destruction of America, unmindful that they could not accomplish so baneful a purpose, without at the same time plunging a dagger into the vitals of Great Britain. "Let your commerce," said he, "come before you—see whether it be not your child that America has in its arms—see of what value that child is—examine and consider whether you ought to shoot—and if you must shoot, shoot so as to avoid wounding what is dearest to you in the world.—Without examining your trade you cannot do this."

For his exertions on these occasions the following letter of thanks was forwarded to him, signed by fifteen of the principal merchants of Birmingham—

"TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

"Birmingham, Feb. 8, 1775.

Sir,

"The merchants and manufacturers who have had a principal share of the American trade from this town and neighbourhood, beg your acceptance, through our hands, of their warmest acknowledgments for your liberal support of our petition to the honourable House of Commons, wherein are stated the evils we already feel, and the greater we have yet to apprehend from a continued stagnation of so important a branch of our commerce as that with North America.

"At the same time we also unite in expressing our particular thanks for the motion you were pleased to make for an inquiry into the manner of both the late petitions from the town of Birmingham having been obtained, an inquiry which could scarcely have failed to give some useful intelligence, and to have fully justified our application to Parliament at so critical a juncture.

"We cannot wonder, Sir, that defamation should have made



its appearance on such an occasion as this, which is the notorious evidence of a weak cause, and whose mischiefs we are persuaded will be as transient as its efforts have been intemperate.

“ We only take the liberty, therefore, of adding our sincere wishes, that you may long fill your distinguished place in the British Senate, and that your persevering endeavours to preserve the rights of the subject, to maintain the prosperity of our commerce, and to secure the tranquillity of this extensive empire, may meet with a success adequate to the patriotic zeal with which they are animated. Being with the greatest regard,

“ Sir, yours,” &c.

Two more important, though indirect, tributes to his public wisdom appeared soon afterwards in the proceedings of the House of Lords: one in the declaratory act of 1766, said to be chiefly his, and censured then by Lord Chatham, was now adopted by his Lordship as the groundwork of a plan which he brought forward in the Lords to conciliate America. The other respected the taxation of that country which Mr. Burke had so long ineffectually reprobated, when, on an incidental allusion to that measure, Lords North, Mansfield, Camden, the Duke of Grafton, and others, all of whom were advisers of the crown at the time it was adopted, now, to the surprise of the nation, utterly and angrily disclaimed having taken any part in advising it. The subsequent evidence of Mr. Penn, at the bar of the House of Lords, also seemed to imply, that America would have been quiet had things remained on the footing left by the Rockingham Administration.

Undeterred by the failure just alluded to of Lord Chatham's scheme in the House of Lords for quieting the troubles in America, Mr. Burke, on the 22d of March, 1775, introduced his celebrated thirteen propositions to accomplish the same object, urged to the attempt, it appears, by the persuasions of Mr. Rose Fuller, whose motion for the abolition of the tea duty he had supported the preceding year. His reluctance to come forward on this occasion, and the aim of the measure itself, are stated with much modesty, yet force.

“ I felt the truth of what my honourable friend represented: but I felt my situation too. His application might have been made with far greater propriety to many other gentlemen. No man was indeed ever better disposed, or worse qualified, for such an undertaking than myself.

“ Though I gave so far into his opinion, that I immediately threw my thoughts into a sort of parliamentary form, I was by no means equally ready to produce them. It generally argues some degree of natural impotence of mind, or some want of knowledge of the world, to hazard plans of government, except from a seat of authority. Propositions are made, not only ineffectually, but somewhat disreputably, when the minds of men are not properly

disposed for their reception; and for my part, I am not ambitious of ridicule; not absolutely a candidate for disgrace.

“ Besides, Sir, to speak the plain truth, I have in general no very exalted opinion of the virtue of paper government; nor of any politics, in which the plan is to be wholly separated from the execution. But when I saw, that anger and violence prevailed every day more and more; and that things were hastening towards an incurable alienation of our colonies; I confess my caution gave way. I felt this, as one of those few moments in which decorum yields to a higher duty. Public calamity is a mighty leveller; and there are occasions when any, even the slightest, chance of doing good, must be laid hold on, even by the most inconsiderable person.

“ To restore order and repose to an empire so great and so distracted as ours, is, merely in the attempt, an undertaking that would ennoble the flights of the highest genius, and obtain pardon for the efforts of the meanest understanding. Struggling a good while with these thoughts, by degrees I felt myself more firm. I derived, at length, some confidence from what in other circumstances usually produces timidity. I grew less anxious, even from the idea of my own insignificance. For, judging of what you are by what you ought to be, I persuaded myself, that you would not reject a reasonable proposition, because it had nothing but its reason to recommend it.

“ On the other hand, being totally destitute of all shadow of influence, natural or adventitious, I was very sure, that, if my proposition were futile or dangerous; if it were weakly conceived, or improperly timed, there was nothing exterior to it, of power to awe, dazzle, or delude you. You will see it just as it is; and you will treat it just as it deserves.

“ The proposition is peace. Not peace through the medium of war; not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations; not peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented from principle, in all parts of the empire; not peace to depend on the juridical determination of perplexing questions; or the precise marking the shadowy boundaries of a complex government. It is simple peace; sought in its natural course, and in its ordinary haunts. It is peace sought in the spirit of peace; and laid in principles purely pacific. I propose, by removing the ground of the difference, and by restoring the *former unsuspecting confidence of the colonies in the mother country*, to give permanent satisfaction to your people; and (far from a scheme of ruling by discord) to reconcile them to each other in the same act, and by the bond of the very same interest which reconciles them to British government.

“ My idea is nothing more. Refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion; and ever will be so, as long as the world endures. Plain good intention, which is as easily discovered at the

first view, as fraud is surely detected at last, is, let me say, of no mean force in the government of mankind. Genuine simplicity of heart is an healing and cementing principle. My plan, therefore, being formed upon the most simple grounds imaginable, may disappoint some people, when they hear it. It has nothing to recommend it to the pruriency of curious ears. There is nothing at all new and captivating in it. It has nothing of the splendour of the project, which has been lately laid upon your table by the noble lord in the blue riband. It does not propose to fill your lobby with squabbling colony agents, who will require the interposition of your mace, at every instant, to keep the peace amongst them. It does not institute a magnificent auction of finance, where captivated provinces come to general ransom by bidding against each other, until you knock down the hammer, and determine a proportion of payments beyond all the powers of algebra to equalise and settle."

Of the moral and physical character of America he had gained so perfect an acquaintance, that the sketch he then drew both of the country and people, though fifty years have elapsed, is as fresh and accurate as any of the present day, and is, in fact, sometimes quoted by those who write upon the United States. It had been, as we have seen, an early subject for his pen; his opinions had been formed respecting it, he expressly tells us, before he entered Parliament; it had been a constant subject of deliberation while he was there; and its importance induced him, favoured by his connexion with the country as colonial agent, to consult every source of information, written and oral, in order to become master of the points in dispute, and guided by circumstances, to point out the wisest policy for England to pursue. The case was different with the Ministry, or rather the succession of Ministries, of the day, who, flitting into and out of the Cabinet like the transient and shadowy figures of a magic lantern, had little time for maturing a plan, and scarcely for continuity of thought on the subject.

"But there is still," said he, speaking of the people, "a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America even more than its population and its commerce; I mean its temper and character.

"In this character of the Americans, a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole: and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive, and untractable, whenever they see the least attempt to arrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies, probably, than in any other people of the earth; and this from a great variety of powerful causes; which, to understand



the true temper of their minds, and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

“ First, the people of the colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England, Sir, is a nation which still I hope respects, and formerly adored her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you, when this part of your character was most predominant; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object, and every nation has formed to itself some favourite point, which by way of eminence becomes the criterion of their happiness.

“ It happened, you know, Sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates; or on the balance among the several orders of the state. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens, and most eloquent tongues, have been exercised; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered.

“ In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English constitution, to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point of fact, and to prove, that the right had been acknowledged in ancient parchments, and blind usages, to reside in a certain body called a House of Commons. They went much farther; they attempted to prove, and they succeeded, that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons, as an immediate representative of the people; whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist.

“ The colonies draw from you, as with their life blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached in this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe, or might be endangered in twenty other particulars, without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound. I do not say whether they were right or wrong in applying your general arguments to their own case. It is not easy indeed to make a monopoly of theorems and corollaries. The fact is, that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them, whether through lenity or indo-

lence, through wisdom or mistake, confirmed them in the imagination, that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles.

“ They were further confirmed in this pleasing error, by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies. Their governments are popular in a high degree; some are merely popular; in all, the popular representative is the most weighty; and this share of the people in their ordinary government never fails to inspire them with lofty sentiments, and with a strong aversion from whatever tends to deprive them of their chief importance.

“ If any thing were wanting to this necessary operation of the form of government, religion would have given it a complete effect. Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people, is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are protestants; and of that kind, which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion.

“ This is a persuasion not only favourable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness in the dissenting churches, from all that looks like absolute government, is so much to be sought in their religious tenets, as in their history. Every one knows that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval with most of the governments where it prevails; that it has generally gone hand in hand with them; and received great favour and every kind of support from authority. The church of England too was formed from her cradle under the nursing care of regular government.

“ But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world; and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very existence depended on the powerful and unremitting assertion of that claim. All protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent; and the protestantism of the protestant religion.

“ This religion under a variety of denominations, agreeing in nothing but in the communion of the spirit of liberty, is predominant in most of the northern provinces; where the church of England, notwithstanding its legal rights, is in reality no more than a sort of private sect, not composing, most probably, the tenth of the people. The colonists left England when this spirit was high; and in the emigrants was the highest of all; and even that stream of foreigners, which has been constantly flowing into these colonies, has, for the greatest part, been composed of dissenters from the establishments of their several countries, and have brought with them a temper and character far from alien to that of the people with whom they mixed.”

The details relating to the condition of the country, its agriculture, and commerce, are too long for quotation; but the delivery of the following exquisite passage drew a burst of enthusiastic applause, and has often been adverted to for its beauty.

“Mr. Speaker, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here. We stand where we have an immense view of what is, and what is past. Clouds indeed, and darkness, rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst might remember all the stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough *acta parentum jam legere, et quæ sit poterit cognoscere virtus.*

“Suppose, Sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most fortunate men of his age, had opened to him in vision, that, when, in the fourth generation, the third Prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing councils) was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one. If, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle, rather than a formed body, and should tell him—‘Young man, there is America—which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men, and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilising conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!’ If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of his day!”

His views on the general question at this time may be stated in

Burke on America in 1766



a few words, as by some who even profess to write history, they are sometimes misrepresented or misunderstood.

America was imperceptibly become a great country without aiming at, or scarcely seeming to know it; formed for strength as some men are born to honours, by a decree beyond their own control; that it was unwise to irritate her to exertion of this strength, when her natural inclination was for peace and trade; that she might be influenced by mildness and persuasion, but would probably resist command.

He contended for the general supremacy of Parliament and the imperial rights of the Crown as undoubted, though these should be exercised with great reserve over, not a colony, but a nation, situated at a great distance, and difficult, if at all possible, to coerce: that in compliance with the unanimous feeling of the people of that nation, all the internal details, especially that of taxation, should remain as hitherto, with their provincial assemblies: that a parliamentary revenue, such as now aimed at, was next to impossible: that England had never enjoyed, and never would enjoy, a direct productive revenue from any colony, but at all events to trust for it rather to voluntary grants, as in Ireland, than to authoritative requisitions: that all harsh acts be repealed: that the colonies be placed on the same footing toward the mother-country as in 1766; that a feeling of friendly concession alone could govern a people free in spirit and in fact, spread over a vast extent of country, and increasing at an unusual rate in numbers: that peace should be sought in the spirit of peace, not in severe parliamentary enactments; and quoted as examples of the success of lenient measures, the instances of Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham: that the right of taxation being relinquished, all moderate men would be conciliated; but if more than all these should be required, then it would be time for us to turn round with a decided negative.

The question as to the *right* of taxing, on which the advocates for coercion so much, though vainly, insisted, he again, as in the speech of the preceding year, treats ironically, or wholly dis-cards from the argument.

“Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation.

“Some gentlemen startle—but it is true; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will you, Sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question.

“I do not examine whether the giving away a man’s money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether,

on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other; where reason is perplexed; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the *great Serbonian bog, betwixt Damiatra and Mount Casius old, where armies whole have sunk*. I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company.

“The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do; but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper, but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant? Or does it lessen the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim, because you have your evidence room full of titles, and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them? What signify all those titles and all those arms? Of what avail are they when the reason of the thing tells, that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit; and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons?”

This speech by which the propositions were recommended excited general admiration, and in power did not fall short of that of the preceding year. Lord Chatham, when asked his opinion of this speech at the time, replied, “it is very seasonable, very reasonable, and very eloquent.” Mr. Fox, nearly twenty years afterwards, applying its views to Parliamentary Reform, said, “Let gentlemen read this speech by day, and meditate upon it by night; let them peruse it again and again, study it, imprint it on their minds, impress it on their hearts—they would there learn that representation was the sovereign remedy for every evil.”

Lord Erskine, also, in a recent speech at Edinburgh, touching on the same theme, observed, “It could only proceed from this cause (the alleged corruption of Parliament), that the immortal orations of Burke against the American war did not produce as general conviction as they did unmingled admiration.” This is certainly not correct; at least Mr. Burke himself, out of the heat of debate, assigned no such reason; he candidly confessed, that the country gentlemen wanted a partner in bearing the burden of taxation; the King wished to see obedient subjects rather than allies; the body of the nation, which was as jealous of undisputed sovereignty as either, fully seconded their views; and the wisdom of the House of Commons alone, unsupported by the people, put an end to the contest.\*

\* The following, written on a sheet of foolscap, are believed to be either the original

Toward the close of the session, after three months' almost daily discussion of American affairs, he presented a remonstrance

notes from which the speech was spoken, or drawn up by himself immediately afterwards, for the information of a friend, to be published on the spur of the moment at Bristol; the hand is larger than his usual writing, but it bears evident traces of having been written in a great hurry, sometimes using the first, sometimes the third person.

### ANALYSIS OF MR. BURKE'S SPEECH, ON OFFERING HIS RESOLUTIONS.

“ Proëm.

“ Apologizing for taking up this measure, stating his own description and situation with great humility, but when he stated in general that (what?) he should propose was not his, but the reasonings and opinions of the Legislature already expressed by our ancestors in old times, were such and such as time had matured and experience confirmed, he had no apology to make, except for any disadvantage these sentiments might receive from the manner of delivering them, &c. &c. &c.

“ He then mentioned the unhappy state of our quarrels with our colonies, which could end only in the destruction of our constitution, and the ruin of the British Empire. That peace only could ensure the one, and restore the stability of the other; not an insidious delusive peace that has slavery in its train, but peace founded on the establishment of the rights of mankind, and on civil liberty, as they are the basis of our empire.

“ Not peace by war—

“ nor by negotiation.

“ Not a peace to be bought by taxes, and bid for at an auction:

“ But by conciliation, and concession of the superior—conciliation having gone forth and entered into the heart of every Briton. The Minister has assumed the form of that angel of light, and breathes the spirit of conciliation.—Would to God it was the real spirit of it in good truth.—He hath been driven to the necessity of making concession, but hath been forced, by some secret force or fatality, to load and clog his measures with principles and conditions, such as must render it impossible for the Americans to accept it, and which must therefore in the end prove a plan to render them still more obnoxious to Parliament and Government here.

“ Leaving behind me and erasing from my mind every idea of Ministers and such persons, I will look only to the spirit and doctrines of your laws, and will seek no peace but where they teach us to look for it, and to follow it.

“ Let us not seek peace by force, but by conciliation.

“ If *conciliation* be used ineffectually there will still (be) room enough left for *force*; but if *force* be first tried, and that shall prove to be used ineffectually, there will be no room for *conciliation*.

“ The magnitude of the object should teach (us) to look to conciliation—and to know that force will not do.

“ View—1. The wealth of the colonies.

2. The number of the people.

3. The principles which animate their spirit.

Principles of liberty.

Principles of religion.

“ View their character and temper—

    Their learning } as derived from the nature of their popular government.  
    and their habits, }

“ Their turn for politics, and their knowledge of such, as taught from their first entrance into life.

“ Consider next their vast distance—

“ Consider how even despotic governments are obliged to use management and address in the government of their distant provinces.

“ If the acts of the opposition in the colonies cannot be prosecuted criminally—

“ There is no way to settle it by compromise.

“ On this subject of compromise I say nothing as to sovereignty.

“ I omit the question as to the right of taxation, and will only speak to practice and fact as found in the precedents of your own conduct.



from New York, hitherto a quiet and loyal colony, upon the harshness shown to her sister states, which met with the same reception from the Minister as the other innumerable petitions and agents did from Lords, Commons, and Privy Council; that is, few of them were received, and none deigned to be answered.

In the mean time, the first blood was drawn in the colonies at Lexington and Concord, followed by the fight of Bunker's Hill, the raising of regular armies, the appointment of General Washington as Commander-in-chief, and other consequent measures, which left the chance of accommodation by any means a matter of doubt.

The rejection of all petitions, no doubt, tended much to the alienation of the public feeling in America; increased, perhaps, by the severity shown to so popular a man as Dr. Franklin, before the Privy Council, the preceding year, on the Massachusetts petition against the governor and deputy-governor of the province; to which, as we have seen, Mr. Burke alluded in the letter to General Lee, without venturing to comment on it with his usual prophetic ingenuity and force.

On that occasion, Dr. Priestley, with whom he was acquainted, relates an anecdote to the following effect: "Going along Parliament Street, on the morning of the 29th of January, 1774, I met Mr. Burke and Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, when the former introduced us to each other, as men of letters, and inquired whither I was going. I replied, I could say whither I *wished* to go, and on explaining that it was to the Privy Council,

" The practice of Parliament  
as to Ireland,  
Wales,  
Chester,  
Durham—

" Following these precedents, I would propose an American representation—but the sea and distance are in my way.—As I cannot give the best, I will offer the next best—and that is—that which is already established—

" Their own Assemblies—

" They are competent to all the purposes of taxation.

" To lay the ground for that solid basis whereon I would again re-establish peace, and replace the empire and its government.—

" Offers six resolutions of facts.

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" Corollaries.

1. That it may be proper to repeal the Tea Act.
2. The Boston Port Bill.
3. The Massachusetts Government Bill.
4. The Military Bill."

The original of this outline draught of so powerful a speech, in a soiled and tattered condition, communicated and purchased as a genuine document, is in possession of Sir P. Phillips.

he desired me to accompany him. The ante-room proved to be so full of persons, on the same errand as ourselves, that I despaired even of getting near the door. 'Keep fast hold of me,' said Mr. Burke, locking my arm within his, and forcing his way, after much difficulty, to the door, 'You are an excellent leader, Mr. Burke.' 'I wish others thought so too,' replied he. We got in among the first, Mr. Burke taking his stand behind the chair next to the President, and I next to him."

Dr. Franklin, whom he had known for about fifteen years, gave him at this time, for so wary a politician, an unusual proof of esteem and confidence, by calling upon him in April of this year (1775), the day previous to his finally quitting London, and opening his mind without seeming reserve. The doctor said he looked to the approaching contest with the most painful feelings; for nothing could give him more sorrow than that separation between the mother country and colonies, which now seemed inevitable, from the obstinate and unaccommodating temper of England; adding, that America had enjoyed many happy days under her rule, previous to this unhappy dispute, and might possibly never see such again.

Among ourselves, dissensions on account of this agitating topic ran high; the old distinctions of Whig and Tory were revived with all their original acrimony, and Mr. Burke, as the oracle of the former, came in for a large share of censure, particularly from Dean Tucker, who represented him as the most artful reasoner living, one who could amuse with tropes, and figures, and fine words, without allowing his design to be seen, till he had entrapped the hearer or reader irrecoverably in the meshes of his argument; other political writers joined in the cry, who, admitting his extraordinary powers, affected to consider them degraded by his becoming so determined a party man.

Some, even of his friends inconsiderately appeared to join in the latter opinion, as if it were possible for any leading English statesman to be otherwise than what is termed a party man. He who expects to lead in political life must of necessity, on first entering into it, either form a party of his own, or attach himself to one of the two great divisions in the state; and though the choice of such associates necessarily rests with himself, it is oftener determined, especially among young men of rank, by the politics of his friends, or family connexions. Should he profess perfect independence on all points, he will find little, or very hollow support in an assembly where, above all others, some certain support is necessary; without it, indeed, he cannot even calculate on the humble merit of being merely useful, and certainly cannot become great.

With a party, on the contrary, he rises into consequence; he has the advantage of profiting by older heads, and equal, if not superior minds to his own; and to use the language of Burke

on another occasion, "he who profits by an equal understanding, doubles the power of his own." No man jumps into Parliament an able statesman, no more than he can start at the bar, with his first brief, an accomplished lawyer, or enter the field, with his ensign's commission, a finished soldier. He must first learn to submit and to serve, and in time may hope to command. It is useless, therefore, to complain of a politician being a party man; we may as well complain that the independence of the limbs is sacrificed by being affixed to the body, without remembering that it is union alone which makes either useful.

Mr. Burke visited France again in the summer, returning not more favourably impressed than before, with the character of her literati and philosophers. His father-in-law, Dr. Nugent, died in Suffolk Street, in November, a worthy and intelligent man, whom Dr. Johnson not only loved, but used to profess himself proud of the honour of standing high in his esteem; he was the author of a new theory of Hydrophobia, and is often mistaken for another Dr. Nugent, a travelling tutor, who published his travels, a translation of Benvenuto Cellini, and other works. In December, he lost another friend and warm admirer in Admiral Sir Charles Saunders, pronouncing, on the same evening, an animated apostrophe to his memory in the House of Commons.

The coercive spirit manifested in the Address at the opening of the session, brought him forward in a forcible appeal to the House to pause in measures of force; supplicating Ministry to assume some other tone than that of violence; not to let England come to the discussion, like the irritated porcupine with its quills, armed all over with angry acts of Parliament.

Several petitions from the clothiers of Wiltshire gave him the opportunity of proposing, on the 16th of November, 1775, a new conciliatory scheme, grounded on the model of the statute of Edward I. *de tallagio non concedendo*.

Three plans, he said, were afloat for quieting America; first, simple war, in order to a perfect conquest; secondly, a mixture of war and treaty; thirdly, the best, and in his opinion only practicable mode, peace founded on concession. Among other things he suggested the renunciation of taxation, the repeal of all obnoxious laws since 1766, a general amnesty, and recognition of the Congress, in order to a final adjustment of grievances; a change in all these points, he would not conceal, necessarily involved a change in the Ministers who had brought the country into the dilemma. Of this speech, which occupied three hours and twenty minutes in the delivery, and was said by many who heard it to possess singular vigour and originality, embracing a vast compass of matter, British and American, only a poor abstract remains; it brought forward all the talents of the House, in



a spirit of emulative excellence, to the discussion; and the division was the strongest Opposition had been yet enabled to muster on the American question, the numbers against the previous question being 105 to 210. In the peroration he said he was confident, both from the nature of the thing, and from information which did not use to fail him, that this bill would restore immediate peace; and as much obedience as could be expected after so rude a shock given to the authority of government, and after so long a continuance of public disturbances.

Four days afterwards, the bill to prohibit all intercourse with America, known by the name of the Starvation Plan, received his unqualified reprobation. Petitions from the West-India and Nova-Scotia merchants, stating their utter ruin to be the consequence of it, were so cavalierly treated, that he moved an ironical resolution, in substance that the House, knowing all things relative to America, required no further information. On some large votes for the army extraordinaries, he remarked, that fasting might as well be recommended to a body of aldermen at a city feast, as economy to a committee of supply. Mr. Wilkes's motion for Reform he opposed; a humane measure of his own, for saving from depredation seamen and vessels wrecked, failed; as did another conciliatory scheme for America which he supported, proposed by Mr. David Hartley.

This gentleman, a representative for Hull, a very honest man, a sound Whig, an indefatigable politician, was a long-winded and heavy orator; so dull indeed, that the period of his rising often became a signal to desert the benches. Having some time after this thinned a full House down to a few dozens, he unexpectedly called for the Riot Act to be read, to support or to explain something in the march of his argument. Mr. Burke, who sat near him, and had anxiously waited to speak to the question, could contain himself no longer, but jumping up, gave vent to his impatience by an irresistibly comic remonstrance, that drew peals of laughter from all present, and which Lord North afterwards used to repeat, as one of the happiest instances of wit he ever heard—"The Riot Act! my dear friend, the Riot Act! to what purpose? don't you see that the mob is completely dispersed?"

That conciliatory measures were not altogether hopeless, notwithstanding the unceasing acts of Congress to inflame the mind of that country, may be inferred from the difficulty with which the declaration of independence, in July of this year, was carried in that assembly itself—one of the most curious facts perhaps in modern history. Six states voted for, six against that measure; and the delegates of Pennsylvania were equally divided in opinion, when at length a member, who had hitherto strenuously opposed it, suddenly changed sides, and decided the question. This hesitation among a body to avow in form what

they were in fact—which had raised armies, fought battles, levied imposts, and resisted the mother-country by vote, injunction, proclamation, and every other possible mode, is a proof that the passions of moderate men, excited for a moment by the arts of the more designing, shrunk from the ultimate consequences of their own violence. It is an equal proof that the conduct of the English Ministry was utterly deficient in wisdom, moderation, and address; for otherwise, scales so nicely poised must have turned in favour of their country.

Some letters in the newspapers this summer, under the signature of Valens, have been attributed to Mr. Burke, though they were really written by William Burke,\* who though he spoke occasionally between 1768 and 1774, found himself much better qualified to wield his pen than his tongue.

Edmund seemed rather to seek relief from all political wrangling, except what the House of Commons required, in the literary society of which he was always so fond. Mr. Arthur Young, going on his well-known tour through Ireland, received from him the following letter of introduction to Lord Charlemont, remarkable for its elegance of expression, and for some of the sentiments on matters connected with the war.

\* This gentleman wrote much, but seldom acknowledged his offspring; many pieces of merit, in prose and verse, were however handed about among his friends. The following is an impromptu:—

*Inscription for the Rook-house at Taplow; written on the spot.*

To the genius of this cell  
Tunes the Muse his rustic shell;  
Here the Muses best are woo'd,  
Here no worldly cares intrude;  
What so cheerful room to dine in,  
Or so cool to drink our wine in?  
Here the grape has double zest;  
Doubly relish'd is the jest;  
Form and state are here abhorred;  
Here my lord's no more a lord;  
Or alike we all are peers,  
When the fragrant Bordeaux cheers.  
Down from off this airy cliff  
Oft are seen in painted skiff  
Nymphs and swains to skim along,  
Wrapt in joy and artless song;  
Love they talk of, and what not—  
So they praise this envied spot;  
When the dusky night draws near,  
The ladies and the tea appear;  
Now our mirth is more refin'd,  
Suiting more their gentle mind,  
All contending for their smile  
Thus another hour beguile;  
Ever be such pleasures new;  
Joys less simple are less true.

W. B.

“ Westminster, June 4th, 1776.

“ My dear Lord,

“ Permit me to make Mr. Young acquainted with you. To his works and his reputation you can be no stranger. I may add, that in conversing with this gentleman, you will find that he is very far from having exhausted his stock of useful and pleasing ideas in the numerous publications with which he has favoured the world. He goes into our country to learn, if any thing valuable can be learned, concerning the state of agriculture, and to communicate his knowledge to such gentlemen as wish to improve their estates by such methods of enlightened culture as none but people of good fortune can employ, especially in the beginning. But examples may be given that hereafter will be useful, when you can prevail on yourselves to let the body of your people into an interest in the prosperity of their country. Your lordship will think it odd, that I can conclude a letter to you without saying a word on the state of public affairs. But what can I say that will be pleasing to a mind formed like yours? Ireland has missed the most glorious opportunity ever indulged by heaven to a subordinate state—that of being the safe and certain mediator in the quarrels of a great empire. She has chosen, instead of being the arbiter of peace, to be a feeble party in the war waged against the principle of her own liberties. But I beg pardon for censuring, or seeming to censure, what I perhaps so little comprehend. It certainly is much above me. Here we are, as we are. We have our little dejections for disappointments, our little triumphs for advantages, our little palliatives for disgraces, in a contest that no good fortune can make less than ruinous. I return to Mr. Young, whom I am sure you will receive with the hospitality which you always show to men of merit. Mrs. Burke joins me in our best compliments to Lady Charlemont. Your lordship, I trust, believes that I have the most affectionate concern in whatever relates to your happiness, and that I have the honour to be ever, my dear Lord,

“ Your most faithful and

“ Obligated humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.”

At a literary dinner party at Sir Joshua Reynolds's about this time, Johnson's epitaph on Goldsmith became the subject of conversation, when various emendations being proposed, and it being agreed that an English would be more appropriate than the Latin one, as well as more consonant to the wishes of their deceased companion and friend, the only difficulty was who should undertake the task of announcing this act of learned rebellion, to what Smollett happily called, “ The great Cham of literature.”



A round-robin, in the manner of discontented sailors, so as to conceal who signed the remonstrance first, being jocularly proposed, was in the same spirit adopted; and Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, and afterwards Bishop of Limerick, who died in 1806, drew up one accordingly, replete with wit and humour. This however being deemed to exhibit more levity than Johnson would like, Mr. Burke seized the pen, and promptly produced the following, which, as Boswell remarks, shows the facility and ease with which he handled smaller matters as well as the greatest.

“We, the circumscribers, having read with great pleasure an intended Epitaph for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith, which, considered abstractedly, appears to be, for elegant composition and masterly style, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned author, are yet of opinion, that the character of the deceased as a writer, particularly as a poet, is perhaps not delineated with all the exactness which Dr. Johnson is capable of giving it. We therefore, with deference to his superior judgment, humbly request that he would at least take the trouble of revising it, and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think proper upon a farther perusal. But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request that he would write the Epitaph in English rather than in Latin; as we think that the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament: which we also know to have been the opinion of the late doctor himself.”

Round the circle in which this was written were signed the names Edm. Burke, Thos. Franklin, Ant. Chamier, G. Colman, W. Vaskell, J. Reynolds, W. Forbes, T. Barnard, R. B. Sheridan, P. Metcalf, E. Gibbon, Jos. Warton. Sir Joshua carried it, and received for answer from Johnson, “that he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription.”—“I wonder,” said he, “that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool;” adding, “I should have thought ’Mund Burke too would have had more sense.”

The terms in which this was couched indicate Mr. Burke’s regard for Dr. Johnson’s feelings, which on such matters were irritable enough; and Johnson, in turn, though in general he cared not whose feelings he hurt, would exhibit much courtesy to those of Burke. When Goldsmith talked on one occasion of the difficulty of living on very intimate terms with a person from whom you differed on an important topic, Johnson replied, “Why, Sir, you must shun the subject as to which you disagree. For instance, I can live very well with Burke; I love his knowledge, his genius, his diffusion, and affluence of conversation; but I would not talk to him of the Rockingham party.”

In recurring to the subject of epitaphs, Mr. Burke, it may be observed, conceived the vernacular language of a country to be

the most fitting for mortuary inscriptions, as though possibly not so durable as the Latin, yet sufficiently so to be intelligible as long as it was likely to be preserved, with the advantage of being universally understood. The Greeks used no Latin, and the Latins no Greek inscriptions. His own practice accorded with this opinion; that on Lord Rockingham, and the character of Sir Joshua Reynolds, are admirable; it is also said he wrote one for Lord Chatham. The following, written about this time, upon an intimate political friend, is in Bushley Church, Worcestershire; few know it to be his, never having been published in any work relating to him; and though not unworthy of his pen, it is more deficient in that force and condensation which distinguish the others alluded to. The same may be said of that on Sir George Saville, hereafter to be noticed.

To the Memory of  
WILLIAM DOWDESWELL,  
Representative in Parliament for the County  
of Worcester,  
Chancellor of the Exchequer in the years  
1765 and 1766, and a Member of the  
King's Privy Council;  
A Senator for twenty years;  
A Minister for one;  
A virtuous citizen for his whole life;  
A man of unshaken constancy, inflexible integrity,  
unremitted industry.

His mind was generous, open, sincere.  
His manners plain, simple, and noble;  
Rejecting all sorts of duplicity and disguise  
as useless to his designs, and odious  
to his nature.

His understanding  
was comprehensive, steady, vigorous,  
made for the practical business of the State.  
In debate he was clear, natural, and convincing.

His knowledge in all things which con-  
cerned his duty, profound.

He understood beyond any man of his time  
the revenues of his country;  
which he preferred to every thing—  
except its liberties.

He was a perfect master of the law of Parliament,  
And attached to its privileges until they  
were set up against the rights of the  
people.

All the proceedings  
which have weakened government, endangered  
freedom, and distracted the  
British Empire, were by him  
strenuously opposed;  
And his last efforts,  
under which his health sunk,  
were to preserve his country from a civil  
war,  
which, being unable to prevent, he had  
not the misfortune to see.

He was not more respectable on the public  
scene

than amiable in private life.  
 Immersed in the greatest affairs,  
 he never lost the ancient, native, genuine  
 English character of a Country Gentle-  
 man.

Disdaining and neglecting no office in life,  
 he was an ancient municipal Magistrate,  
 with great care and clear judgment  
 administering justice, maintaining the  
 police, relieving the distresses, and  
 regulating the manners, of the  
 people in his neighbour-  
 hood.

An husband and father  
 the kindest, gentlest, most indulgent.  
 He was every thing in his family except  
 what he gave up to his country.

His widow, who labours with life in order to form the minds of  
 his eleven children to the resemblance of their father, erects this  
 monument.

The tenor of the Address (1776-77), and a motion by Lord John Cavendish, Nov. 6, 1776, respecting a proclamation of General Howe at New York, drew from Mr. Burke, in an animated address, some intemperate remarks: for which the great interests at stake, and the decided conviction of our whole system of policy being wrong, forms the best apology.

Towards Christmas, a resolution was taken by the Rockingham party to secede from Parliament on all questions connected with America, utter silence being in their opinion the next best step to disregarded admonition. An Address to his Majesty, explanatory of their views and reasons, which was meant to be presented in form by the leading members of both Houses, and another of similar tenor to the colonies, were drawn up by Mr. Burke, and appear in his works; the former a bold, and dignified, and elaborate paper; the latter perhaps not quite so good.

It is pretty certain the design did not originate with him; but when applied to for his sentiments, he, in a letter to the Marquis of Rockingham, dated Jan. 6th, 1777, seems to approve the design. Yet at the same time the objections are so fully and ably stated, with so clear a foresight of all the probable consequences, remote and immediate, and the little hope of its effectual accomplishment from the clashing interests and feelings of the minority, that the reader is impelled to draw a directly opposite conclusion to that of the writer. So thought the Marquis. For after the receipt of this letter, the interview with the King, the delivery of the memorial, and the attempt at positive and general secession, such as was at first contemplated, were abandoned.

That such a decisive measure never can be proper under any circumstances, is perhaps saying too much. That it should be often resorted to, or in any case but formidable and pressing necessity, and the most obvious folly on the part of the majority, can only indicate more of anger than of wisdom. The crisis was cer-



tainly one of the most momentous ever experienced by the country; yet to secede under such circumstances, was not to meet, but to fly from the danger; and in the then temper of the nation, would have only drawn disapprobation from one half of the people, and, probably, ridicule from the other. Persuasion may in time do much, but silence can make few converts; to desert the field is not the way to subdue the enemy. Frequent failure in opposing what he may think the worst policy, and in accomplishing his own most conscientious designs, are natural conditions in the existence of a Member of Parliament, for which he who does not come prepared has not adequately considered the obligations of the office.

A leader of Opposition indeed may imagine that in debating, he is only playing the game of the Minister, by throwing out hints from which the latter so far profits as to be enabled to prolong his power. It is also extremely discouraging to be constantly out-voted, when possibly not out-argued; to spend time and breath, "to watch, fast, and sweat, night after night," as Mr. Burke himself forcibly expresses it, in the forlorn hope of constant minorities. No person felt this more than himself; yet none has more ably stated the necessity, and even the advantages resulting to the country and to the individual from a well-directed Opposition, than he has done, in a conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds.

"Mr. Burke," said he, "I do not mean to flatter; but when posterity reads one of your speeches in Parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect; that not one vote would be gained by it."

"Waiving your compliment to me," replied the orator, "I shall say in general that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in Parliament. A man who has vanity speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner that we see plainly the Minister has been told, that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity, from what they have heard, that it must be altered."

"The House of Commons," he continued in reply to some other remarks, "is a mixed body; I except the minority, which I hold to be pure (*smiling*), but I take the whole House. It is a mass by no means pure, but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many members who generally go with the Minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen

who are in parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence."

When it was remarked, there were always in Parliament a majority, who from various motives, interested and disinterested, inclined to the support of government, he observed, "True, Sir; that majority will always follow—

"Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium."

Sir Joshua asked, what would be the consequence if a Minister, sure of a majority, were to resolve that there should be no speaking at all on his side?

Mr. Burke—"He must soon go out. That plan has been already tried, but it was found it would not do."

His position at this time with those who supported the war was somewhat peculiar, though to a public man not unexpected. He had been long bitterly reviled as the factious though eloquent advocate of rebellious America; and he was now, for such is political hostility, almost equally abused for preserving on the same subject what was termed a factious silence: and occasionally Lord Rockingham was as much sneered at by the ministerial writers for being directed by an Irish Secretary, as the King had recently been abused by Opposition for being under the influence of a Scotch favourite.

To explain more at large to his constituents his reasons for seceding, and his general views on American matters, he drew up and published in April, 1777, the famous "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol," one of his best pamphlets, which, though written for a momentary purpose, contains within it principles as to public matters which must ever live. He condemns by allusion, rather than in direct terms, the speculations of Drs. Price and Priestley, which went to destroy all authority, as well as of those who fell into the other extreme of enforcing it beyond due discretion; and the whole is couched in a warmer strain than he had hitherto employed against the authors of the war. The following solemn warning is only one among many instances of the prophetic spirit he displayed in this as in most other great questions:

"I think I know America. If I do not, my ignorance is incurable, for I have spared no pains to understand it: and I do most solemnly assure those of my constituents who put any sort of confidence in my industry and integrity, that every thing that has been done there has arisen from a total misconception of the object; that our means of originally holding America, that our means of reconciling with it after a quarrel, of recovering it after separation, of keeping it after victory, did depend, and must depend, in their several stages and periods, upon a total renunciation of that unconditional submission which has taken such possession of the minds of violent men."

A reply to this came from the eccentric Earl of Abingdon, also



a member of Opposition, who, educated at Geneva, had caught the spirit of the democratical principles of that state, and, with more zeal than discretion or good sense, is said to have made a present to Congress of an estate which he possessed in America. In the House of Lords he possessed little weight; in the press he made a still worse figure against such an opponent, who on this occasion did not deign to reply,—a mark of contempt which nettled his lordship not a little;—though an anonymous writer assailed and exposed him with considerable powers of ridicule.

In the midst of this political bustle, a claim was also made upon his opinion in a matter of taste. That extraordinary character Barry, who possessed neither time that he could justly spare, nor wealth to support him in its progress (having at its commencement something less than a guinea in the world that he could call his own), had undertaken to decorate the great room of the Society of Arts with paintings gratuitously, and now solicited Mr Burke to communicate his ideas on the most appropriate designs. From the following answer to this application, there is perhaps little doubt that whatever merit there be in those great works, some portion of it is due to him; the remark of Dr. Johnson, when he saw them in 1783, being, “Whatever the hand may have done, the mind has done its part. There is a grasp of mind there which you will find nowhere else.”

“TO JAMES BARRY, ESQ.

“Mr. Burke presents his best compliments to Mr. Barry, and begs pardon for making use of another’s hand in giving him his thanks for the great honour he has done him by inscribing to him the print of Job; as well as for the prints sent to his son Richard of the other five designs: but being obliged to go out in great haste, after having been engaged in business for the whole morning, he is under the necessity of dictating this note while he is dressing.

“Mr. Barry does him too much honour in thinking him capable of giving him any hints towards the conduct of the great design in which Mr. Burke is very happy to find he is engaged. Mr. Burke is, without any affectation, thoroughly convinced that he has no skill whatsoever in the art of painting; but he will very cheerfully turn his thoughts towards recollecting passages of modern or middle history, relative to the cultivation of the arts and manufactures; and Mr. Barry will judge, better than he can, whether they are such as will answer his purpose.

“Mr. Burke will have the pleasure of waiting on Mr. Barry, to communicate to him what occurs to him on the subject, at his first leisure moment.”

The debts of the Civil List, and an increase of its annual amount, brought Mr. Burke forward again, severely censuring the wastefulness of Ministry; and his interposition, in a happy



mixture of argument and irony, saved Alderman Sawbridge, whose language was indecorous and disrespectful towards his Majesty, from public reproof.

On another occasion an opponent was soon afterwards silenced by his wit. During one of the debates on Lord Pigot's recall from Madras, he had twice given way to other speakers, when observing the Chairman of the India Company proceeding to read a variety of well-known public papers instead of adducing any new arguments, he interrupted him by observing, "That if it were the object of the honourable member to tire and thin the House by reading all the heavy folios on the table, he supposed, in courtesy he must submit; but to prepare for the task, he begged leave to send for his night-cap;" which producing general laughter, was followed by a shout of —go on! go on! The hint of the night-cap, however, has been so far improved upon by a mob-orator of the present day, as to have been actually produced as a threat of persevering in efforts to address indignant and impatient auditors, who would not otherwise give him a hearing.

On the discussion of this subject, in a very masterly manner, in connexion with the treatment of Lord Pigot by the contradictory votes of the India proprietors, he was cheered in an unprecedented manner, exciting, in the language of contemporary writers, "such sudden and extraordinary bursts of approbation as were not warranted by the usual practice of the House," and which in return produced some sharp animadversions from the other side, "that the wit displayed in turning the Company's late resolutions and conduct into ridicule, was as ill-placed and as improperly applied, as the theatrical applause which it produced was irregular and indecent."

It was on this question that he first threw out doubts on the conduct of Mr. Hastings; partly through communications from the Pigot family, with which he was acquainted; partly from other friends resident in India, among whom was the late Sir Philip Francis, a man of superior talents, independent mind, and an abhorrence of any thing resembling oppression; little inferior to that of Mr. Burke himself.

To this gentleman with whom he had been early acquainted, he wrote a letter, of which the following is an extract, on the rising of Parliament, strenuously recommending to his good offices his old friend and associate William Burke, then proceeding to India to better his fortune. This gentleman soon became Agent to the Rajah of Tanjore, and afterwards Deputy Paymaster-General for India, supplying Edmund, it is said, with much and minute information respecting that country.

"Westminster, 9th of June, 1777.

"My dear Sir,

"Our common friend, John Bourke, informs me that you still retain that kindness which you were so good to express towards

me before you left London. This wide disconnected empire will frequently disperse those who are dear to one another; but, if this dispersion of their persons does not loosen their regards, it every now and then gives such unexpected opportunities of meeting, as almost compensate the pain of separation, and furnishes means of kind offices, and mutual services, which make even absence and distance the causes of new endearment and continued remembrance.

“These thoughts occur to me too naturally as my only comforts in parting with a friend, whom I have tenderly loved, highly valued, and continually lived with, in an union not to be expressed, quite since our boyish years. Indemnify me, my dear Sir, as well as you can, for such a loss, by contributing to the fortune of my friend. Bring him home with you and at his ease, under the protection of your opulence. You know what his situation has been, and what things he might have surely kept, and infinitely increased, if he had not had those feelings which make a man worthy of fortune. Remember that he asks those favours which nothing but his sense of honour prevented his having it in his power to bestow. This will be a powerful recommendation to a heart like yours. Let Bengal protect a spirit and rectitude which are no longer tolerated in England.

“I do not know, indeed, that he will visit your kingdom; but if he should, I trust he will find a friend there whose manner of serving him will not be in the style of those who acquit themselves of a burden. Mr. Burke’s first views, indeed, are at Madras; but all India is now closely connected; and your influence and power are such, that you may serve him materially even there. I will not wrong your friendship by pressing this matter any further, but it is indeed near to my heart.

“I say nothing of your Eastern politics. The affairs of America, which are as important, and more distracted, have almost entirely engrossed the attention which I am able to give to any thing. . . . France gives all the assistance to the colonies which is consistent with the appearance of neutrality. Time is to show whether she will proceed further, or whether America can maintain herself in the present struggle, without a more open declaration, and more decided effort from that power. At present the Ministers seem confident that France is resolved to be quiet. If the Court of Versailles be so pacific, I assure you it is in defiance of the wishes and opinions of that whole nation.”

At home, Mr. Burke’s son, a promising young man, failed in a trial for academical distinction at Oxford, in a theme admirably adapted to the depth and discrimination of the powers of the father, “The Origin and use of Printing.”

To Mr. Fox, who, with Lord John Townshend, spent the summer in Ireland in order to gain a nearer view of its interior politics, he wrote a confidential and interesting letter, in October,



on the state of parties, giving the most friendly and disinterested advice on the best line of public conduct for him to pursue, and giving his opinion on the public feeling in England in the following characteristic passage:—

“As to that popular humour, which is the medium we float in, if I can discern any thing at all of its present state, it is far worse than I have ever known, or could ever imagine it. The faults of the people are not popular vices; at least they are not such as grow out of what we used to take to be the English temper and character. The greatest number have a sort of an heavy, lumpish acquiescence in Government, without much respect or esteem for those that compose it. I really cannot avoid making some very unpleasant prognostics from this disposition of the people. I think many of the symptoms must have struck you; I will mention one or two, that are to me very remarkable.

“You must know that at Bristol we grow, as an election interest, and even as a party interest, rather stronger than we were when I was chosen. We have just now a majority in the corporation. In this state of matters, what, think you, have they done? They have voted their freedom to Lord Sandwich, and Lord Suffolk!—to the first at the very moment when the American privateers were domineering in the Irish Sea, and taking the Bristol traders in the Bristol Channel; to the latter, when his remonstrances on the subject of captures were the jest of Paris and of Europe.

“This fine step was taken, it seems, in honour of the zeal of these two profound statesmen in the prosecution of John the Painter; so totally negligent are they of every thing essential, and so long and so deeply affected with trash the most low and contemptible; just as if they thought the merit of Sir John Fielding was the most shining point in the character of great ministers, in the most critical of all times, and, of all others, the most deeply interesting to the commercial world! My best friends in the corporation had no other doubts on the occasion, than whether it did not belong to me, by right of my representative capacity, to be the bearer of this auspicious compliment. In addition to this, if it could receive any addition, they now employ me to solicit, as a favour of no small magnitude, that, after the example of Newcastle, they may be suffered to arm vessels for their own defence in the Channel. Their memorial, under the seal of Merchants' Hall, is now lying on the table before me. Not a soul has the least sensibility on finding themselves, now for the first time, obliged to act as if the community were dissolved, and, after enormous payments towards the common protection, each part was to defend itself, as if it were a separate state. I don't mention Bristol as if that were the part furthest gone in this mortification. Far from it; I know, that there is rather a little more life in us than in any other place. In Liverpool they are literally almost ruined by this American war; but they love it, as they suffer



from it. In short, from whatever I see, and from whatever quarter I hear, I am convinced, that every thing, that is not absolute stagnation, is evidently a party spirit, very adverse to our politics, and to the principles from whence they arise.

“There are manifest marks of the resurrection of the Tory party. They no longer criticise, as all disengaged people in the world will, on the acts of Government; but they are silent under every evil, and hide and cover up every ministerial blunder and misfortune, with the officious zeal of men who think they have a party of their own to support in power. The Tories do universally think their power and consequence involved in the success of this American business. The clergy are astonishingly warm in it; and what the Tories are, when embodied and united with their natural head, the crown, and animated by their clergy, no man knows better than yourself.

“As to the Whigs, I think them far from extinct. They are, what they always were (except by the able use of opportunities), by far the weakest party in this country. They have not yet learned the application of their principles to the present state of things; and as to the dissenters, the main effective part of the Whig strength, they are, to use a favourite expression of our American campaign style, ‘not all in force.’ They will do very little; and, as far as I can discern, are rather intimidated than provoked at the denunciations of the court in the Archbishop of York’s sermon. I thought that sermon rather imprudent when I first saw it; but it seems to have done its business.”

A present from Dr. Robertson, of his History of America, then recently published, drew from Mr. Burke an interesting letter, critical and complimentary, and alluding more especially to his own favourite topic, the study of human nature, which he considered the most useful of all studies, and was accustomed to say, that “a statesman deficient in this knowledge was not master of half his business.”

“I am perfectly sensible of the very flattering distinction I have received in your thinking me worthy of so noble a present as that of your History of America. I have, however, suffered my gratitude to lie under some suspicion, by delaying my acknowledgments of so great a favour. But my delay was only to render my obligation to you more complete, and my thanks, if possible, more merited. The close of the session brought a great deal of troublesome though not important business on me at once. I could not go through your work at one breath at that time, though I have done it since.

“I am now enabled to thank you, not only for the honour you have done me, but for the great satisfaction and the infinite variety and compass of instruction I have received from your incomparable work. Every thing has been done which was so natur-

ally to be expected from the author of the History of Scotland, and of the age of Charles the Fifth. I believe few books have done more than this towards clearing up dark points, correcting errors, and removing prejudices. You have too the rare secret of rekindling an interest on subjects that had so often been treated, and in which any thing that could feed a vital flame appeared to have been consumed. I am sure I read many parts of your history with that fresh concern and anxiety which attend those who are not previously apprised of the event. You have besides thrown quite a new light on the present state of the Spanish provinces, and furnished both materials and hints for a rational theory of what may be expected from them in future.

“The part which I read with the greatest pleasure, is the discussion on the manners and character of the inhabitants of that new world. I have always thought with you, that we possess at this time very great advantage towards the knowledge of human nature. We need no longer go to history to trace it in all stages and periods. History, from its comparative youth, is but a poor instructor. When the Egyptians called the Greeks children in antiquities, we may well call them children; and so we may call all those nations which were able to trace the progress of society only within their own limits. But now the great map of mankind is unrolled at once, and there is no state or gradation of barbarism, and no mode of refinement which we have not at the same moment under our view; the very different civility of Europe and of China; the barbarism of Persia and of Abyssinia; the erratic manners of Tartary and Arabia; the savage of North America, and of New Zealand. Indeed you have made a noble use of the advantages you have had. You have employed philosophy to judge on manners, and from manners you have drawn new resources for philosophy. I only think that in one or two points you have hardly done justice to the savage character.

“There remains before you a great field. *Periculosæ plenum opus alexæ tractas, et incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso.* Whenever these ashes will be spread over the present fire, God knows. I am heartily sorry that we are now supplying you with that kind of dignity and concern which is purchased to history at the expense of mankind. I had rather by far that Dr. Robertson's pen were only employed in delineating the humble scenes of political economy, than the great events of a civil war. If our statesmen had read the book of human nature, instead of the journals of the House of Commons, and history instead of acts of parliament, we should not by the latter have furnished out so ample a page for the former.”

Contrary to the opinion of Johnson, who spoke slightly of his labours in history, and who in fact cared little for such subjects, Robertson, whom he had known for many years, was with

Burke a favourite writer, at least as to his manner. Not so Gibbon; on whose first volume appearing, the preceding year, he called on Sir Joshua Reynolds, a day or two afterwards, and, in the hearing of Mr. Northcote, pronounced the style vicious and affected, savouring too much of literary tinsel and frippery; a sentence which all the best judges have since confirmed.

The next session, 1777—1778, brought back the seceders of Opposition to the performance of their public duties. Those of Mr. Burke, who grasped the labouring oar as his particular province, were this year unusually diversified and fatiguing. His seat at least was not a sinecure; whatever else he spared, he never spared himself; he seemed often to be trying the experiment, what compass of political interests and business it was possible for the human mind to embrace and retain; what degree of labour in expounding them to endure. A few of the leading points in this, as in all the other sessions, are alone necessary to be alluded to here.

On the first day of the session, November 18th, his address was thus noticed by a contemporary—

“If it were possible, we would give a detail of a speech which, for the space of nearly two hours, commanded the attention, and excited the laughter of all, and drew tears from the sympathizing few; but we must omit all those changes of ridicule which were rung by Mr. Burke’s ingenuity upon the defence which Lord North made in answer to the charge against General Burgoyne’s proclamation. We must also pass over his proofs of the futility of our conquests in the Colonies, and touch only on that pathetic supplication which he made to the House, to seize the present happy moment to attempt an accommodation, when neither elated with insolent victory, nor debased by abject defeat, we could with honour to ourselves make such proposals to our colonists, as they could without dishonour accept.

“He apostrophized with a degree of enthusiasm upon the noble spirit of men, who, if they had not been rebels, he could have been lavish in praising; of women who, reduced by the ruin of civil discord to the most horrible situation of distress and poverty, had constancy, generosity, and public spirit enough, to strip the blankets, in a freezing season, from themselves and their infants, to send them to the camp, and preserve that army which they had sent out to fight for their liberty. And shall Britons, said Mr. Burke, overlook such virtue? And will they persist in oppressing it? Shall we give them no alternative but unconditional submission? A three years’ war has not terrified them, distressed as they are, from their great purpose.—Let us now, over such generous bosoms, try the power of lenity.”

The navy estimates, the suspension of the habeas corpus Act, Mr. Fox’s motion, December 2d, for an inquiry into the state of the nation, the ordnance estimates, the raising of troops without



consent of Parliament, and private aids to the Crown, furnished opportunities for assailing the war and its conductors with great effect.

On the 6th of February he introduced a motion for papers relative to the military employment of the Indians in the war in America, by a speech three hours and a half long, which excited not only extraordinary testimonies of admiration, but was considered by all who heard him the very best he had ever delivered. The theme, as connected with the interests of humanity, possessed much interest, and in itself was peculiarly fitted to display some of his most popular qualities as a speaker. Strangers being excluded from the gallery, no tolerable report, or even abstract of it, has ever been published, or perhaps preserved. The pathetic episode, however, of Miss Macrae, a young lady betrothed to a British officer, and entrusted to two Indians to convey her to a place of safety, but who, quarrelling by the road about the division of the expected quantity of rum promised as their reward, savagely murdered her at once to end the dispute—was so vividly painted as to excite an emotion of abhorrence against such auxiliaries throughout the country.

Heated by the powers of the speaker, Colonel Barré, in a fit of enthusiasm, offered to nail up the speech, if published, on every church door in the kingdom, by the side of the proclamation for a general fast. Governor Johnstone thought it fortunate for the two noble lords (North and Germaine) that there were no strangers present, or their enthusiasm and indignation would have excited the people to tear them to pieces on their way home from the House. Sir George Saville said to many of his friends—"he who did not hear that speech, has not witnessed the greatest triumph of eloquence within memory."

After all, it may be doubted whether this display of oratorical art and real humanity was not a party question. Congress would have engaged these allies if England had not anticipated her; and Lord Chatham, though venting a torrent of indignation on the same side of the question, in the House of Lords, could not disprove that the same allies were employed under his own administration twenty years before.

Eleven days afterwards another tacit tribute to the wisdom of Mr. Burke's advice for an amicable adjustment of the differences with the Colonies, appeared in a conciliatory plan of Lord North, taken chiefly from that proposed by the former three years before. It was supported also by the same arguments, to the great indignation of many of his lordship's high Tory supporters in the House. Mr. Fox tauntingly congratulated the noble lord on at length becoming a proselyte to the doctrines of his honourable friend. The time, however, was gone by in which they could have had effect. His lordship, though a man of talent and personal integrity, wanted enlargement of mind for the circumstances

in which he was placed; as a minister he was too often a long march in the rear of events; his remedial measures came when they were forced not voluntarily proffered; he could foresee little till it pressed upon him with overpowering necessity.

America now would accept nothing short of independence, and the junction of France to enable her to attain this object, for which the minister seemed quite unprepared though often dinned in his ears by the member for Bristol, seemed to render it certain. Under this impression it became a question with Opposition whether to acknowledge the independence of that country at once, and by so doing secure commercial preferences to the mother country—an alliance offensive and defensive—and other advantages accruing from the kindly feelings produced by this concession and our remaining influence and old connexion; or by persisting to contend for what appeared no longer attainable, not only lose these benefits ourselves, but throw them into the scale of France, our constant and watchful enemy.

To the former, as an unavoidable result, Mr. Burke, after much deliberation, inclined: "not," he said, "as a matter of choice, but of hard and overpowering necessity; in the latter light only he regarded it. On the day that he first heard of the American states having claimed independency, it made him sick at heart; it struck him to the soul, because he saw it was a claim essentially injurious to Great Britain, and one which she could never get rid of; never! never! never! It was not to be thought, therefore, that he wished for the independency of America. Far from it. He felt it as a circumstance exceedingly detrimental to the fame, and exceedingly detrimental to the interests of his country. But when, by a wrong management of the cards, a gamester had lost much, it was right for him to make the most of the game as it then stood, and to take care that he did not lose more."

Lord Chatham as strenuously opposed any admission of the kind; declaring that the independence of America once acknowledged, the sun of England was set for ever, and, in urging this sentiment in the House of Lords, was seized with that illness which terminated in his death. Deficient in some respects, and open to censure in many others, he was nevertheless the greatest war minister this country ever had. But he was no prophet; time, which has belied his prediction as to the dependence of England on America, has shown the superior judgment of the leader of the Rockingham party. The latter, on the death of this great man being announced, immediately urged in his place the necessity for the nation showing its sense of his services by a provision for his family, in addition to all the posthumous honours it could bestow. He was also one of the pall-bearers at the funeral.

A proposition by Lord Nugent to revise a series of oppressive

restrictions which existed on the trade of Ireland naturally claimed the serious consideration and support of Mr. Burke. His great effort was in a speech on the 6th of May, exhibiting a more comprehensive yet practical view of the commercial condition, intercourse, interests, and capabilities of the kingdoms, contrasting their comparative advantages and defects, than had ever been given there before. The grievance being undeniable, both sides of the House agreed at once to the remedy, by removing them, when suddenly a number of hostile petitions pouring in from the trading and manufacturing towns, diverted the minister from his purpose; and thus, though a narrow and selfish system of policy had already driven America into revolt, yet, with the fact before their eyes, the very same policy again risked the loss of Ireland.

Bristol taking a conspicuous part in the endeavour to repress the industry of the sister island, called upon her representative to support her views. The dilemma occasioned by this demand could not be otherwise than unpleasant to him. But regarding principle above every consideration of prudence, he manfully avowed, that to comply with this desire, would be to sin against his conscience, against the first principles of justice, against the general prosperity of the empire, and however his constituents might think, against the truest interests of trade itself.

“If, from this conduct,” said he, “I shall forfeit their suffrages at an ensuing election, it will stand on record an example to future representatives of the Commons of England, that one man at least had dared to resist the desires of his constituents, when his judgment assured him they were wrong.”

A late writer,\* from whom to differ requires some effort of resolution, says that neither Mr. Fox nor Mr. Burke applied the principles of political economy to the proper treatment of Ireland at this time. With regard to Mr. Fox, the statement may be correct; but it is certainly erroneous as applied to Burke, who pushed the matter as far as it was *then* prudent to go. If it was not so far as a statesman of the present day deems necessary, this can be no impeachment either of his wisdom or of his judgment, considering the general ignorance and prejudice prevailing in the public mind on such matters at that period, and the risk he ran of losing every thing by asking for too much at once. As to the general principles of political economy, Mr. Burke was the first who attempted to introduce and render them familiar to the House of Commons: Mr. Fox, on the contrary, professed not to understand or to care for them.

To state his reasons more fully for declining compliance with this claim upon his services, he wrote in April and May, 1778, “Two Letters to Gentlemen of Bristol on the Bills relative to

\* Moore's Life of Sheridan, p. 210, 4to edit.—published since the first edition of this work.



the Trade of Ireland." These expound, in a few touches, some of the chief principles of commerce; such as the advantage of freedom of intercourse between all parts of the same kingdom; of the necessity for reciprocity of benefits; of the evils of restriction and monopoly; of the advantage to ourselves of all our customers, particularly our fellow-subjects, as the Irish were, being rich rather than poor; and that the gain of others is not necessarily our loss, but on the contrary an advantage, from causing a greater demand.

Political economists now consider these truths the mere alphabet of their art, while merchants, if they do not deny them in theory, can rarely be brought to approve many of them in practice. Exclusions and restrictions, the depression of one body of individuals or district of country to exalt another, belong almost as much to their system as the invoice and ledger. His arguments, which were then in a great degree new, produced little effect in the quarter he wished; the people of Bristol could not be convinced there was equity or policy in giving a free trade to Ireland; his determination, however, continued unchanged, adding, "While I remain under this unalterable and powerful conviction, you will not wonder at the *decided* part I take. It is my custom so to do when I see my way clearly before me; and when I know that I am not misled by any passion, or any personal interest, which in this case I am very sure I am not."

Another offence in the eyes of his constituents was in vigorously supporting Sir George Saville's bill for the Relief of the Roman Catholics, then much oppressed by the severity of the penal laws existing and in force against them. It was in fact believed among his friends, like many other bills brought forward by others, to be wholly his own, though not formally avowed in order to avoid popular odium; and to come with more weight as the measure of an opulent and respected country gentleman. Its justice was immediately recognized by the almost unanimous votes of both Houses of Parliament.

During the progress of the measure frequent correspondence took place with Mr. Pery, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, to whom a letter written by Mr. Burke, July 18th, 1778, on the Heads of a Bill for the Relief of the Dissenters and Roman Catholics of Ireland, is extant in his works. Dublin was then enthusiastic in his praise; a design, warmly seconded by the public, was even announced to him by the same gentleman, of erecting his statue in that city. This contemplated honour proved but a spurt of gratitude, soon forgotten and never since revived; so that this great man, the most illustrious, in many respects, that city or the nation ever produced, who had he been born in Scotland, would be almost deified by the people, has not in Ireland procured a single stone to his memory: the only tributes of respect, known to the writer, being a picture in the

examination theatre of Trinity College, and a bust in its library. An unfeigned humility made him shrink from the idea of a statue; and his observations on it, above a year afterwards, in a letter to a member of the Irish legislature, on her domestic affairs, when his popularity there had declined, are marked by his accustomed force and truth.—

“I too have had my holiday of popularity in Ireland. I have even heard of an intention to erect a statue. I believe my intimate friends know how little that idea was encouraged by me; and I was sincerely glad that it never took effect. Such honours belong exclusively to the tomb—the natural and only period of human inconstancy, with regard either to desert or to opinion; for they are the very same hands which erect, that very frequently (and sometimes with reason enough) pluck down the statue. Had such an unmerited and unlooked for compliment been paid to me two years ago, the fragments of the piece might at this hour have the advantage of seeing actual service, while they were moving according to the law of projectiles, to the windows of the Attorney-General, or of my old friend Monk Mason.”

In a sharp debate on the ordnance estimates, soon after this time, no reply being given to his questions respecting their unusual amount, and the Speaker proceeding to put the question, he declared he would not suffer it to be put until some explanation was given, when after a pause, it appeared that not one of the board knew any thing practically of the subject. Touching on the point of order, which had been alluded to at the moment, he considered it, he said, contemptible, when, instead of forwarding, it stood in opposition to the substance of their duty, and long afterwards boasted that, during all the years he had sate in Parliament, he had never called any member to order.

The indecisive action of Admiral Keppel with the French fleet, during the summer of 1778, and the dissension to which it gave rise with Sir Hugh Palliser, his second in command, became so much a theme for contention after the meeting of Parliament, that in fact almost every man in the nation ranged himself on the side of one or other of the parties.

For the Admiral, who had been taken from the ranks of Opposition to command the fleet, Mr. Burke had a most warm regard, having first met him at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom the Admiral had been an early patron; political connexion improved the acquaintance into close and lasting friendship, of which the apostrophe to his memory, in a letter to a noble lord, is a proof, and at the same time, perhaps, one of the most eloquent tributes to a dead friend in our language. The Admiral was not less warm in reciprocal admiration, and had declared of Mr. Burke, as well as his old commander Sir Charles Saunders, and others of the party, “that if the country were to be saved, it could be only by the virtue and abilities of that won-

derful man." When about to undergo the ordeal of a court-martial, Mr. Burke accompanied him to Portsmouth, received from him there his picture, by Mr. Reynolds, as a species of legacy in case the court-martial in their sentence should decide against his honour and character, remained with him during much of the trial, and is reported to have assisted in arranging his defence.

Something of this kind seems to be hinted in a passage of the character of the Admiral just alluded to.—

"I ever looked on Lord Keppel as one of the greatest and best men of his age; and I loved and cultivated him accordingly. He was much in my heart, and I believe I was in his to the very last beat. It was after his trial at Portsmouth that he gave me this picture. With what zeal and anxious affection I attended him through that his agony of glory; what part my son, in the early flush and enthusiasm of his virtue, and the pious passion with which he attached himself to all my connexions, took—with what prodigality we both squandered ourselves in courting almost every sort of enmity for his sake,—I believe he felt, just as I should have felt, such friendship on such an occasion.

"I partook indeed of this honour, with several of the first, and best, and ablest men in the kingdom, but I was behind hand with none of them; and I am sure that if, to the eternal disgrace of this nation, and to the total annihilation of every trace of honour and virtue in it, things had taken a different turn from what they did, I should have attended him to the quarter deck with no less good will and more pride, though with far other feelings, than I partook of the general glow of national joy that attended the justice that was done to his virtue. \* \* \*

"Feeling the loss of Lord Keppel at all times, at no time did I feel it so much as on the first day when I was attacked in the House of Lords. Had he lived, that reverend form would have risen in its place, and with a mild paternal reprehension to his nephew the Duke of Bedford, he would have told him that the favour of that gracious Prince who had honoured his virtues with the government of the navy of Great Britain, and with a seat in the hereditary great council of his kingdom, was not undeservedly shown to the friend of the best portion of his life, and his faithful companion and counsellor\* under his rudest trials."

Mr. Burke's own interests were about this time, or soon after, attacked by Lord Verney, in a suit in Chancery, calling upon him, in conjunction with his brother Richard and William Burke as

\* In the debate, Feb. 1, 1781, on Sir Hugh Palliser's appointment to Greenwich Hospital, he said, "No one subject that had ever in the whole course of his life challenged his notice had been studied by him with so much attention and so much care as the transactions of the 27th July, because the honour and the life of the dearest friend he had on earth, made those transactions of the most serious importance to him," and much more to the same effect.



partners with his Lordship, to bear part of the loss sustained by unsuccessful speculations in the funds. This participation he denied by affidavit; nor was the circumstance probable in itself, or some better evidence of it would have been adduced, than the Peer could bring forward on the occasion; they had not, in fact, been friends for some time; and though his brother Richard might possibly have participated in the transaction, it was scarcely fair to call upon Edmund to pay his debts of honour, for there could be no legal claim. As a considerable degree of misrepresentation has prevailed on this point, it may be necessary to state, that as a holder of India stock, he might have profited by this property as any other man would do, though even this is doubtful; but there is not the slightest foundation for the report of his gambling in the funds, which was not merely at variance with his habits but his principles.

Another charge urged against him, as if it were not a misfortune rather than a fault, was that of being often in debt. Let it be remembered, however, that the rental of his estate was not estimated at more than 600*l.* per annum, which, with his Irish property, occasional supplies, and the produce of his literary labours, formed nearly the whole of his income, after the cessation of the agency for New York. Moving in the sphere of life in which he did, this must be confessed to be a poor pittance; yet out of this, it may be stated without indelicacy, as he more than once mentioned it himself, he contributed to the support of several poorer relations, and this of course could only be effected by very rigid economy. To one relation near Castletown Roche he allowed 30*l.* per annum out of the property in that vicinity, ever since he came into possession of it in 1765.

He had, in fact, no extravagant propensities to indulge; his domestic arrangements were under the prudent management of his lady; his coach-horses took their turn in the plough; his table, to which men of merit or distinction in every class were always welcome, partook more of neatness and moderation, than parade and profusion. At Beaconsfield, he preserved a frank and cheerful hospitality, which those who enjoyed once were glad of the opportunity to enjoy again; and while in town, he frequently asked political and literary friends to dine on beef-steaks, or a leg of mutton, and occasionally gave little more than his invitation professed.

Another accusation urged against him at this time was, that he displayed much more of ability than of candour in harassing ministry with the most unmeasured condemnation; but the same may be said of all Oppositions; and, looking to the magnitude of the contest, the incapacity shown in its conduct, and the unfortunate results, it will be difficult to say that his censures were unfair, ill-timed, or unjust. Mr. Fox was upon almost all occasions more violent and much more personal, to a degree beyond even

the usual parliamentary license; he constantly wore in the House what was considered the American uniform, buff and blue, which Mr. Burke, except when solicited so to do, which was not unfrequently the case, declined to make his common dress. The most moderate men in fact, lost their equanimity on this topic; and Messrs. Wilkes, Saybridge, and others of the same stamp, were sometimes scurrilous, for on no preceding occasion had debates run so high; and even the House of Lords often forgot its characteristic decorum, in the violence of the language used.

This spirit found ample vent in the session, 1778 and 1779, in a series of motions by Mr. Fox, after the acquittal of Admiral Keppel, on the state of the Navy, March 8th; of Greenwich Hospital; and an address to the King to remove Lord Sandwich, which were supported by Mr. Burke; who also took part on the question of the threatening manifesto of the Commissioners sent to negotiate with America: on the state of Ireland, March 12th; on Mr. Dunning's motion respecting the powers of the Admiralty to grant or refuse Courts Martial, March 15th; on an Inquiry into the conduct of the American War, May 13th; on the Budget, May 31st; on a Bill for exemptions for being pressed into the Navy; and on another for limited service in the Army—a measure which he recommended by the strongest arguments, and though it was rejected then, it has since been as wisely as liberally adopted.

In this year, among many of the first characters of the time, he followed his old acquaintance Garrick to the grave, and looking stedfastly towards the place of interment, remarked to one of the gentlemen present, that “the spot was well chosen, for the statue of Shakspeare seemed to point to the grave where the great actor of his works was laid.”

It was in the early part of this year that a present from the admired and accomplished Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, of his translation of the Greek orator Isæus, the master of Demosthenes, whose orations, as explanatory of the laws of property in Athens, are necessarily interesting to a lawyer, though perhaps for the same reason hitherto neglected by grammarians and philologists, drew from Mr. Burke the following reply:—

“ March 12, 1779.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I give you many thanks for your most obliging and valuable present, and feel myself extremely honoured by this mark of your friendship. My first leisure will be employed in an attentive perusal of an author who had merit enough to fill up a part of yours, and whom you have made accessible to me with an ease and advantage, which one, so many years disused to Greek literature as I have been, could not otherwise have.

“ Isæus is an author of whom I know nothing but by fame; I am sure that any idea I had from thence conceived of him, will

not be at all lessened by seeing him in your translation. I do not know how it has happened, that orators have hitherto fared worse in the hands of the translators than even the poets; I never could bear to read a translation of Cicero. Demosthenes suffers, I think, somewhat less; but he suffers greatly; so much, that I must say, that no English reader could well conceive from whence he had acquired the reputation of the first of orators.

“I am satisfied that there is now an eminent exception to this rule, and I sincerely congratulate the public on that acquisition. I am, with the greatest truth and regard, my dear Sir, your most faithful and obliged humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.”

Ireland, notwithstanding his renewed endeavours in her favour, being still denied participation in the commerce of the empire, came to a variety of resolutions against importing British manufactures; and with still more effect in the way of threat, formed her memorable volunteer associations, “nothing resembling which,” said Lord Sheffield, writing a few years afterwards, “has ever been observed in any country, at least where there was an established government.”

Even Scotland was not quiet. The concessions to the Catholics in the preceding year instigated a mob not only to raze their chapels to the ground, but to destroy their private houses and property. A petition from this body, praying for compensation for their losses, and security against further injury, was presented by Mr. Burke, who found an opportunity on this occasion for exercising his wit, though, as a Scripture phrase, perhaps not in the best taste, yet to the great amusement of the House; for observing Lord North to be asleep (a frequent failing of that nobleman in public), at a moment he was attributing the popular excesses to the supineness of those in power, he instantly turned the incident to advantage—“Behold,” said he, pointing to the slumbering Minister, “what I have again and again told you, that Government if not defunct, at least nods; brother Lazarus is not dead, only sleepeth.”

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## CHAPTER VII.

Economical Reform—Letter on Parliamentary Reform—Conduct during the Riots—Intercedes for mercy towards the Rioters—Elocution Walker—Slave Trade—Rejection at Bristol—The Prince of Wales, Mr. Burke, and the Curate—Anecdotes of Mr. Burke’s humanity and playful humour.—Note to Sir W. Jones—Opposed to Mr. Fox on the repeal of the Marriage Act.—Mr. Sheridan.—Shearing the Wolf.—Change of Ministry.—Letter to Dr. Franklin.

DURING the summer of 1779, the dangers of the country had alarmingly increased; no progress was made in subduing America;



the expense of the war exceeded all precedent; the enemy's fleet sweeping triumphantly through the channel, threatened Plymouth and other parts of the coast; and Ireland, in a state of moral, seemed rapidly proceeding to actual, revolts, by riots in Dublin, by the extension of the system and the imposing attitude of the volunteers, by the strong measure of a money-bill for six months only, and by very general resolutions against "the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic selfishness of England."

The speech from the throne, 25th November, recommending her hitherto rejected claims to consideration, drew from the Member for Bristol many bitter taunts on the want of the means, not of the will by Ministry, to coerce her by fire and sword as they had attempted with America. These reproaches, though stigmatized as inflammatory, were perhaps not undeserved; and the sense of the House was so far with him, that having sat down once or twice from being unable to render himself heard in the more distant parts of it, in consequence of a violent cold and hoarseness, he was pressed by loud and repeated calls from both sides, to proceed. Dire necessity alone had extracted this measure of conciliation from the Minister, upon whom a vote of censure for the neglect and delay, moved by Lord Ossory, Dec. 6th, gave birth to highly-applauded speeches by Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; the latter remarking, that that which had at first been requested as a favour, was delayed till angrily demanded as a right; till threats extorted what had been denied to entreaties; till England had lost the moment of granting with dignity, and Ireland of receiving with gratitude.

When, however, Lord North introduced his plan of relief, such as it was, he gave it his approval, though without that warmth which the zealous spirits of Ireland expected, and they themselves displayed on the occasion, but which he conceived its tardy and reluctant justice scarcely deserved. Hence arose a misrepresentation there, that he was altogether indifferent to the relief now granted; his popularity therefore sunk at once, both in the land of his birth and in that of his adoption; in Bristol, for conceding any commercial advantage whatever, and in Dublin, for withholding any point, however indifferent or unimportant in itself; a lot to which all statesmen, who act without favour or partiality towards contending interests, are too often exposed.

To remove this impression in Ireland, he wrote "A Letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq." dated Jan. 1, 1780, explanatory of his views and motives, which, though meant to be private, soon found its way, by the zeal of his friends, into the periodical prints of the time, and in some degree set him right with the more intelligent part of his countrymen.

The ill success of the war, and the increased taxation required to support it, occasioning at this moment loud outcries for Parliamentary Reform, and retrenchment of the public expenditure, Mr.

Burke dexterously wrested attention from the former, which he had always deemed an unsafe and impracticable measure, to the latter, which he thought was in every respect most desirable and expedient.

Of all men in the House he was perhaps the best qualified for this arduous undertaking by a share of political courage which shrunk from no duty however invidious, and habits of business which, at all times laborious, were on this occasion exerted beyond all precedent. "For my own part," said he, "I have very little to recommend me for this, or for any task, but a kind of earnest and anxious perseverance of mind, which with all its good and all its evil effects is moulded into my constitution." Cautious of experiment, as he professed to be, even to timidity, this feeling formed a pledge, that no crude or showy innovations should be attempted merely because they were new; and his idea of a very cheap government not being necessarily the very best, rendered it certain that nothing really useful should be taken away. He knew too much of human nature, and of the business of the State, to be led astray by visionary schemes of hopeless purity and impossible perfection. The habits of the country, he knew, were any thing but niggardly toward public offices and public servants. While duty, therefore, required that nothing gross should be permitted to remain, a personal as well as public liberality ensured that no injustice should be inflicted upon individuals; that economy should not become penury, or reform utter extirpation.

His notice of motion, on the 15th December, opened a brief but lucid exposition of the outlines of his plan, to which Opposition gave much praise for the matter and the manner, no one else venturing to say a word on so tender a subject. A slight incident, on this occasion, again showed his dexterity in debate. While enforcing the necessity for frugality, and recommending to the Minister the old and valuable Roman apothegm *magnum vectigal est parsimonia*, he used a false quantity, rendering the second word *vēctīgal*. Lord North, in a low tone, corrected the error, when Mr. Burke, with his usual presence of mind, turned the mistake to advantage. "The Noble Lord," said he, "hints that I have erred in the quantity of a principal word in my quotation; I rejoice at it; because it gives me an opportunity of repeating the inestimable adage,"—and with increased energy he thundered forth—" *magnum vect-ī-gal est parsimonia*."

Great as was the idea entertained of his talents, expectation was infinitely surpassed by the production of the plan itself, introduced by the memorable speech of the 11th of February, 1780, which every one conversant with political history has read, and he who has read will not readily forget. No public measure of the century received such general encomium. Few speeches from the Opposition side of the House ever fell with greater effect than this; and of itself, had he never made any other, would place him

in the first rank of orators and practical statesmen, for comprehensiveness of design, minute knowledge of detail, the mingled moderation and justice towards the public and to the persons affected, the wisdom of its general principles, and their application to local objects. As a composition it has been considered the most brilliant combination of powers that ever was, or perhaps can be, devoted to such a topic; and when printed, passed through a great number of editions.

The whole of the scheme was comprised in five bills; embracing the sale of forest lands; the abolition of the inferior royal jurisdictions of Wales, Cornwall, Chester, and Lancaster; of Treasurer, Comptroller, Cofferer, Master, and a variety of inferior officers in the Household; of Treasurer of the Chamber; of the Wardrobe, Jewel, and Robes Offices; of the Boards of Trade, Green-cloth, and of Works; of the office of third Secretary of State; of the Keepers of the Stag, Buck, and Fox Hounds; much of the civil branches of the Ordnance and Mint; of the patent offices of the Exchequer; the regulation of the army, navy, and pension pay offices, and some others; and above all a new arrangement of the Civil List, by which debt should be avoided in future, and priority of payment ensured to the least powerful claimants, the First Lord of the Treasury being the last on the list.

The bare idea of reforming so many offices is astounding to any man of moderate courage; but to reduce or to regulate so many sources of influence, to place the remedy side by side with the grievance, to encounter the odium of annihilating or diminishing the emoluments of the possessors enjoyed perhaps for years, without notice or inquiry, was considered the boldest attempt ever made by any member out of office, and supposed to affect too many interests even for the authority of those who were in; putting aside the complication and difficulty presented in every stage of its progress.

“It must remain,” said Mr. Dunning in a burst of admiration, “as a monument to be handed down to posterity of his uncommon zeal, unrivalled industry, astonishing abilities, and invincible perseverance. He had undertaken a task big with labour and difficulty; a task that embraced a variety of the most important objects, extensive and complicated; yet such were the eminent and unequalled abilities, so extraordinary the talents and ingenuity, and such the fortunate frame of the honourable gentleman’s mind, his vast capacity and happy conception, that in his hands, what must have proved a vast heap of ponderous matter, composed of heterogeneous ingredients, discordant in their nature and opposite in principle, was so skilfully arranged as to become quite simple as to each respective part, dependent on each other; and the whole at the same time so judiciously combined, as to present nothing to almost any mind tolerably intelligent, to divide, puzzle, or distract it.”



“Mr. Burke’s Reform bill,” says the historian Gibbon, “was framed with skill, introduced with eloquence, and supported by numbers. Never can I forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the House, and even by those (Gibbon himself, as a Member of the Board of Trade, was one of them) whose existence he proscribed.”

“Only one sentiment,” remarks another contemporary who voted against the measure, “pervaded the House and the nation, on the unexampled combination of eloquence, labour, and perseverance which had been displayed by their enlightened author. They covered with astonishment and admiration even those who, from principle or from party, appeared most strenuous in opposing the progress of the bill itself through every stage.”

Innumerable testimonies of the same kind might be quoted even from some of the Ministry, who were nevertheless ingenious enough to oppose in detail what they applauded in the gross. A considerable part of March, April, and May, were occupied in debating the different clauses: that for abolishing the office of third Secretary of State was lost on the 8th of the former month by a majority of seven, after one of the hardest fought contests ever remembered.

Five days afterwards, however, by the irresistible effect of the wit of the mover, as much as his eloquence, sentence of death was passed on the poor Board of Trade by a majority of eight; the two thousand three hundred folio volumes of its labours, rather unluckily urged by Mr. Eden in its defence, being ridiculed with such inimitable effect by Mr. Burke, as to be, in the opinion of many, the chief cause of condemnation: execution of the sentence, however, was contrived by the Ministry to be delayed for the present; and a week afterwards, the sentiments of the House upon the bill altogether seemed unexpectedly changed by other clauses of importance being rejected by great majorities.

This measure cost him during the session eleven or twelve clever speeches, combining so much labour, ingenuity, and wit, that it became a question in which of these points he excelled. In the debate on the Board of Works (April 28th), “Mr. Burke,” said a contemporary, “distinguished himself more than ever by the force of his arguments, the fertility of his invention, and the pleasantry with which he enlivened a matter apparently dry and insipid in itself.”

Another writer on the subject (*Political Magazine*, vol. i. p. 473), says, “It was generally agreed both by members and strangers, that Mr. Burke had been seldom more agreeable in the House of Commons than on this evening. He evidently came down with his mind made up to the fate (rejection) of the remaining clauses of his bill, and therefore treated them with all that ready wit, pleasantry, and good humour which are the real features of his character.”

A proposal by Lord North to give the India Company the required three years' notice previous to the dissolution of their charter, produced a speech of great fervour and animation from the Member for Bristol against it: he supported a bill for suspending the elective franchise of revenue officers, and also a motion by Mr. Dunning, for securing the independence of Parliament.

Amid these duties he found time (April 4th) to write a letter on the affairs of Ireland, enforcing his former opinions, to John Merlott, Esq. of Bristol.

Eight days afterwards (April 12th), he addressed another to the chairman of the Buckinghamshire meeting for obtaining Parliamentary Reform; a scheme which he considered ineffectual to its intended purpose, and pregnant with danger in its general effects on the Constitution. The result of his inquiries we may ascertain from the following passage:—

“ I am now growing old. I have from my very early youth been conversant in reading and thinking upon the subject of our laws and constitution, as well as upon those of other times and other countries. I have been for fifteen years a very laborious Member of Parliament; and in that time have had great opportunities of seeing with my own eyes the working of the machine of our government; and remarking where it went smoothly and did its business, and where it checked in its movements, or where it damaged its work.

“ I have also had and used the opportunities of conversing with men of the greatest wisdom and fullest experience in those matters; and I do declare to you most solemnly and most truly, that on the result of all this reading, thinking, experience, and communication, I am not able to come to an immediate resolution in favour of a change of the groundwork of our constitution; and in particular that in the present state of the country, in the present state of our representation, in the present state of our rights and modes of electing, in the present state of the several prevalent interests, in the present state of the affairs and manners of this country, the addition of an hundred knights of the shire, and hurrying election on election, will be things advantageous to liberty or good government.”—In another part of this letter he adds—“ Please God I will walk with caution, whenever I am not able clearly to see my way before me.”

On the 8th of May, he spoke still more decidedly against the question, on Alderman Sawbridge's annual motion for the same object—A periodical work of the time (*Political Magazine*), styled this “ a most able, ingenious, and elaborate speech;” and the outline of it,\* found among Mr. Burke's papers, even more than verifies this description; for in many points it is perhaps unan-

\* Burke's Works, vol. x. p. 72.

swerable. No man can be considered conversant with this important and much-talked of subject who has not read all that he has written upon it.

About this time, a few petitions to repeal the indulgences granted to the Catholics two years before, excited to action the Protestant associations under Lord George Gordon; a moody fanatic, whose talents were contemptible, and whose language in the House, often coarse and reprehensible, was sometimes almost treasonable, though disregarded as the ravings of a half-madman. He had moved without finding a seconder, that the petition presented by Mr. Burke the preceding session, from the Roman Catholic sufferers by the riots in Scotland, "be thrown over the table;" and now, to give further proofs of his zeal in the same cause, called together, "for the honour of God," the rabble of London. The consequences of this proceeding were the riots; one of the most disgraceful pages in our domestic history, when the powers of the members of government, seemingly sunk in hopeless apathy, waited to be roused by the spirit and good sense of the king, who, by taking the responsibility upon himself of ordering the military to act, restored the metropolis to the dominion of order and law.

In the exigency of the moment, when Mr. Fox, with inconsiderate and unjustifiable party feelings, refused to strengthen the hands of government, Mr. Burke, much to his honour, strongly recommended it; advising him and Opposition generally, to forget all their differences in unanimity and defensive associations. As a powerful advocate of the persecuted sect, the fanatical feeling ran strongly against him among some of the leaders; his residence in the broad sanctuary was more than once heard to be threatened, he was reviled as a Jesuit in disguise, nick-named Neddy St. Omer's, and caricatured as a monk stirring the fires of Smithfield, in addition to much more of similar vituperation. Trusting, however, to a considerable share of popularity, or believing that the bulk of the mob, being bent on plunder and riot, cared little for any thing else, he did not hesitate to mix with a party of them, and experienced no great personal ill-will. His own notice of the adventure, written soon after to Mr. Shackleton, is as follows:—

"My wife being safely lodged, I spent part of the next day in the street amidst this wild assembly, into whose hands I delivered myself, informing them who I was. Some of them were malignant and fanatical, but I think the far greater part of those whom I saw were rather dissolute and unruly than very ill disposed. I even found friends and well-wishers among the blue-cockades."

An account which appeared in some of the newspapers of the day (London Chronicle and others), gives an anecdote which exhibits his personal fearlessness on the occasion.



“This day (June 6th) a detachment of foot-guards took possession of Westminster Hall, the doors of which they at last closed to prevent the mob entering there: several members of both Houses, who walked down on foot, were thus prevented from getting into the House for a considerable time, among whom was Mr. Burke, who was presently surrounded by some of the most decent of the petitioners, who expostulated with him on his conduct, in abetting Sir George Savile’s motion for the Roman Catholic bill.

“Mr. Burke in his defence, said he certainly had seconded the motion for the bill, and thought himself justified in so doing; he said he understood he was a marked man, on whom the petitioners meant to wreak their vengeance; and therefore he walked out singly amongst them, conscious of having done nothing that deserved their censure in the slightest degree, having always been an advocate for the people, and meaning to continue so. Mr. Burke at length got rid of his troublesome interrogators.”

Few things do more credit to the active and perhaps sensitive humanity of this eminent man, than his zealous though unostentatious endeavours for the extension of the royal mercy to the chief part of the unhappy rioters who, having been convicted of the crime, now awaited the awful retribution of the law. With this view he drew up some reflections on the approaching executions, and exerted his influence in pressing letters to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mansfield, the President of the Council, and the Secretary to the Treasury, to submit his opinions to his Majesty, and Lord North. Public justice, he urged, ought to be satisfied with the smallest possible number of victims; that numerous executions, far from increasing, diminished the solemnity of the sacrifice; anticipating in this respect the general feeling of the present day, that if not absolutely characteristic of a sanguinary disposition, such scenes frequently repeated are certainly not useful. The letters and reflections appear in his Works.

For the original instigators of the tumults, among the higher classes, however, he had no such consideration, uttering against them in Parliament several bitter anathemas; they, he said, and not the ignorant and misled multitude, ought to be hanged; and when some of the leading “Associators” were seen in the lobby of the House, he exclaimed loudly in their hearing—“I am astonished that those men can have the audacity still to nose Parliament;” and had previously remarked that freedom of debate in the Commons of England had arrived at a new era, when a bludgeoned mob in the street aimed to destroy that freedom, and soldiers with fixed bayonets were employed at the doors to protect it.

On the 20th of June, after calm had been restored, petitions

were again presented against tolerating Popery, to which neither Ministers nor Opposition would give any countenance. Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke spoke for three hours each against reviving such an intolerant spirit; the latter, after expressing the warmest attachment to the Church of England, avowed that he abominated any thing like intolerance, moving five resolutions to this effect, and in reprobation of the late excesses, which were with little opposition carried. He also thwarted popular prejudice on another point. A bill had passed the Commons to prevent Roman Catholics from being permitted to give scholastic instruction to Protestants, when finding it likely to be productive of some injustice, he drew up a petition to the other House, which had so much effect with Lord Thurlow, that on the third reading he quitted the woolsack, and by one of his forcible assaults upon the principle of the measure, drove it out of the House without a division.

One of the persons who particularly solicited Mr. Burke's exertions on this occasion, was Mr. (or, as he was commonly termed, elocution) Walker, author of the Pronouncing Dictionary, and other works of merit, and who had given lessons in the art to young Burke. This gentleman had been educated a Presbyterian, but being much in the habit of discussing religious subjects in places where such topics never can be properly discussed, namely, in public religious debating societies, of which there was one at Coach-maker's Hall, a singular result followed; two or three persons were persuaded by his arguments to become Presbyterians, while he himself was argued into the propriety of turning Roman Catholic! The law in question aiming a deadly blow at his means of livelihood, he appealed forcibly to Mr. Burke one day in the vicinity of the House of Commons, who conceiving he was serving the interests of literature, introduced him to a nobleman accidentally passing, with the following characteristic exordium: "Here, my Lord Berkeley, is Mr. Walker, whom not to know, by name at least, would argue want of knowledge of the harmonies, cadences, and proprieties of our language. Against this gentleman and against others who may be considered public benefactors, we are going, my Lord, upon a poor, ungrounded prejudice of the refuse of the mob of London, to commit an act of gross injustice: and for what? For crimes moral or political? No, my Lord, but because we differ in the meaning affixed to a single word (pronouncing it emphatically)—*transubstantiation*."

Having to present a petition to the House of Commons on the same subject some time before, in which he discovered some incorrectness of language or expression almost the moment it was to come forward, he nevertheless set about correcting it, though conscious it would be of little use; remarking, "if we are not

favourably received, at least let us be worthy of it." While engaged in this way at the door, writing very fast, and, as he was often accustomed to do, conversing at the same moment with half-a-dozen persons round him interested in the prayer of the petition, the Speaker, Sir Fletcher Norton, called for him somewhat impatiently to proceed. "It is hard, Mr. Speaker," said he, with an arch expression of countenance, but without raising his eyes from the paper or ceasing to write, "it is hard you cannot wait even a moment—'No; not to stay the grinding of the axe,'" a quotation from the fifth act of Hamlet, in allusion to the speed with which the prince was to be put to death in England, and appropriately applied to the expected fate of the petition.

The humanity of Mr. Burke, exerted on another occasion, gave a fillip to the ingenious malice of the daily press. A man, it seems, had been sentenced to the pillory at St. Margaret's Hill, Southwark, for attempts at an atrocious offence, when the multitude stoned him so as to occasion immediate death; and for noticing this in the House of Commons with a remark on its cruelty as being so much more severe a sentence than the law awarded, a newspaper chose to indulge in some silly but most slanderous reflections, for which a rule for a criminal information was obtained against the editor, though, on apology, not pressed.\* Five years afterwards, on repeating in his place the same remarks on a nearly similar occurrence in Bristol, the slander was reiterated, when finding it necessary to bring an action against the printer, the jury awarded him, there being no attempt at defence, £150 damages. It is remarkable, that shortly after this his friend Lord Loughborough, himself a judge, had to appeal to a jury against the same unprincipled and abominable insinuations, which had no other foundation than the same party, or personal hostility as in the case of Mr. Burke; and he received the same damages.

In this year, also, another more extensive and important

\* The detail of the occurrence in the newspapers exhibits a degree of barbarity that amply justified Mr. Burke's remarks. Two men, it seems, were punished at the same moment for the offence:—

"One of them being of short stature, and remarkably short-necked, could not reach the hole made for the admission of the head. The officers of justice nevertheless forced his head through the hole, and the poor wretch hung rather than walked as the pillory turned round. Previous to being put in, he had deprecated the vengeance of the mob, and begged for that mercy which, from their exasperation at his crime, and their want of considering the consequences of their cruelty, they seemed very little to bestow. He soon grew black in the face, and the blood issued from his nostrils, his eyes, and his ears; the mob nevertheless attacked him with great fury. The officers seeing his situation, opened the pillory, and the poor wretch fell down dead on the stand of the instrument. The other man was likewise so maimed and hurt by what was thrown at him, that he lay there without hope of recovery."



scheme of humanity occupied the ever active mind of the member for Bristol; no less than the abolition, or material alleviation, of the horrors of the slave-trade; and a variety of thoughts on the subject, with a sketch of a new negro code were committed to paper. There were many reasons, however, against bringing forward such a measure then, and among these were, the incessant contests which American affairs occasioned in Parliament; the odium which such an innovation on the rights of trade and property would bring on Opposition from the West India interest; the policy of confining their strength to the more pressing grievance of the war; the impossibility of Opposition by itself succeeding in such a design under any circumstances whatever; the temper of the nation, which was not at all ripe for the discussion; and perhaps the unpopularity he had already incurred at Bristol, and which such a proposal would increase to exasperation. Time has shown that he judged rightly. Mr. Wilberforce, who took it up six years afterwards, has found it necessary to devote a whole life to the subject.

Mr. Burke's plan likewise embraced a minute regulation of the trade in all its stages, at a moment when very little hope could be entertained of its total abolition; and had it been adopted, all the grosser horrors of the traffic would have been obviated. It is gratifying, however, to every lover of benevolence and talents, to find that many of his suggestions for the treatment of slaves in the islands are at length, after so long an interval, adopted. For the late regulations laid before Parliament, will be found nearly a transcript from the fourth section, or head of his Negro code, as may be seen in his works, vol. ix. p. 301—another instance of what has been remarked more than once, that his wisdom was almost always a long stage in advance of the age in which he lived.

To the exertions of Mr. Wilberforce he always gave the most zealous support, and his zeal was often eulogized in verse and prose; the following came from an old friend already introduced to the acquaintance of the reader, among the people called Quakers:—

### THE NEGRO.

*Addressed to Edmund Burke.*

O Thou, this country's boast, this age's pride,  
Freedom's firm friend, and Pity's gen'rous guide,  
Great Burke! whose voice when wretchedness complains,  
Humanity's invaded rights maintains.  
Hark! Nature speaks in injur'd Africk's right,  
And deeds of horror are disclos'd to light:—  
Thou wert not silent that important day,  
On such a theme thou could'st not silent stay.  
When such a voice arose in such debate,  
And Truth roll'd onward with impetuous weight,  
Who dar'd to vindicate the impious deed,  
And with unblushing front for slav'ry plead?

The dissolution of Parliament in the beginning of autumn, necessarily carried him to Bristol, to ascertain whether the rejection he had apprehended on account of disagreeing with his constituents on certain points of policy, was likely to take effect. To a meeting held at the Guildhall, on the 6th of September, he delivered his celebrated speech, the best ever uttered on such an occasion, and perhaps never excelled by any thing he spoke elsewhere. Were it always in the power of eloquence to conciliate, or argument to persuade, there were in this enough of both to redeem not only the crime of differing in opinion with his constituents, but more serious offences, had such been committed. Declining all apology for opposing the wishes, though he was satisfied, he said, not the interests, of those he represented, he entered on his defence. The charges against him were four;—in not visiting the City more frequently—in supporting Lord Beauchamp's Insolvent Debtor's Bills—the Irish Trade Acts—and the relief granted to the Roman Catholics. Each of these he defended with extraordinary ability; rendering even the common and temporary affair of an election, a medium for promulgating great and permanent political truths—such as the hustings never before supplied us with, and never since, except perhaps in the instance of another great man lately in his contests at Liverpool.

“Gentlemen,” said he, in summing up, “I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said that in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged that to gratify any anger, or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any man in any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind—that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant; and further than the opinions of many would go along with me.—In every accident that may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress—I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted.”

The main body of the Dissenters of the Corporation, and much of the weight of property and respectability\* in the city,

\* The following, among other resolutions, passed amid a large and most respectable body of the Corporation and Merchants:

“Bristol, Sept. 6, 1780.

“At a great and respectable meeting of the friends of Edmund Burke, Esq., held at the Guildhall, this day,

The Right Worshipful the Mayor in the chair;

“Resolved—That Mr. Burke, as a Representative for this city, has done all possible honour to himself as a senator and a man; and that we do heartily and honestly approve of his conduct as the result of an enlightened loyalty to his Sovereign, a warm and zealous love to his country, through its widely-extended empire; a jealous and watchful care of the liberties of his fellow-subjects; an enlarged and liberal understanding of our commercial interest; a humane attention to the circumstances of even the lowest ranks of the community; and a truly wise.

were decidedly in his favour; the million indeed were of another opinion, and against numbers on such an occasion it was useless to contend. "Were I fond of a contest," said he, "I have the means of a sharp one in my hands. But I have never been remarkable for a bold, active, and sanguine pursuit of advantages that are personal to myself."

The resolution to decline being immediately taken, and as readily declared in another speech, brief, but expressive, he thanked the electors for the favours they had already conferred, and honestly confessed his regret that they would not continue them; adding, that in sorrow, not in anger, he took his leave; in person as he deemed most proper, rather than by letter as was most customary; for as in the face of day he had accepted their trust, so in the face of day he accepted their dismissal, conscious that he had nothing to be ashamed of. The appeal was very powerful, and the scene almost affecting, increased by the feelings of many of the auditory on the sudden death of one of the candidates, "showing us," said Mr. Burke, at the moment, no less truly than pathetically, "what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" Bowing to the sheriffs, to the other candidates present, and to the assembled multitude, he quitted the hustings, and Bristol thus suffered itself to become a subject for reproach for ever.

If a popular election were always the exercise of sound discretion, the rejection of so great a man would be strange: but being, as it is, too often the result of tumultuous feeling and prejudice, the wonder ceases. Of all eminences, it has long been observed, that that which is raised on popular admiration is the most slippery and the most treacherous, continually falling from under the wisest and soundest statesmen, without the slightest demerit on their part. It may be termed the tight rope of politics, "a tremulous and dancing balance," on which none but the most dexterous political posture-master can hope to maintain himself long; experience has amply proved that he cannot depend upon his footing a moment: for that line of conduct which the more enlightened know to be right, and he himself feels to be conscientious, is as often as not that for which he may be cried up by the multitude to-day, and pulled down to-morrow.

So was it with this distinguished statesman. He had merely exerted toward Ireland the same liberality of principle he had shown to America, and precisely on the same principle; and while the one constituted his greatest merit in the eyes of Bristol, the other, from the most selfish motives among the people of that place, became his most serious offence. The injury accruing to

politic, and tolerant spirit in supporting the National Church with a reasonable indulgence to all who dissent from it; and we wish to express the most marked abhorrence of the base arts which have been employed, without regard to truth and reason, to misrepresent his eminent services to his country."



his own interests, on account of thus legislating in favour of the general interests of the kingdom on the one hand, and of oppressed individuals (small debtors\* and Roman Catholics) on the other, was considerable. The representation of Bristol, from its wealth, commerce, and population, was certainly an important object to Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke was in every respect a high honour to Bristol. A great man and a great city are made for each other, and none, but the most obvious and weighty reasons, should be permitted to separate them.

It was about this time, perhaps, that, hurt by the reception he had so undeservedly experienced, he gave vent to momentary irritation against the mercantile character:—"Do not talk to me of a merchant;—a merchant is the same in every part of the world—his gold his God, his invoice his country, his ledger his bible, his desk his altar, the Exchange his Church, and he has faith in none but his banker."

This conversational sally, however, was by no means his serious opinion. Commerce had been, from the first, as we have seen, his favourite study as a statesman; and in one of his early tracts there is a remarkable passage which the experience of our own day has amply verified, to the effect, "that agriculture would not attain any perfection until commercial principles were applied to it, or in other words, until country gentlemen were convinced that the expenditure of a small portion of capital upon land, was the true secret of securing a larger capital by ensuring increased returns."

In adverting to the arguments of some of his own party, three years afterwards, on the India Bill, who urged that merchants were, from their habits, incapable of governing a country such as India, he dissented from such an opinion; liberally adding—"I have known merchants with the sentiments and the abilities of great statesmen; and I have seen persons in the rank of statesmen, with the conceptions and character of pedlars."

Malton, for which he was formerly chosen, again received, and, for the remainder of his political life, retained him as her representative; "and the humble borough," remarks a judicious his-

\* In allusion to the inquiries of Mr. Howard respecting that unhappy class, he drew the following admirable character of that celebrated philanthropist.

"I cannot name this gentleman without remarking that his labours and writings have done much to open the eyes and hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern arts; not to collect models or collate manuscripts, but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original, and it is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefit of his labour is felt more or less in every country. I hope he will anticipate its final reward by seeing all its effects fully realized in his own."

torian,\* “gained by such a member an honour which the greatest commercial city might reasonably envy.”

It is thus that such places, not wholly under the influence of a popular spirit, make up in practical utility what they want in theoretical perfection; and one portion of the kingdom, even by its presumed faults, is enabled to repair the prejudice or injustice of another. Without this resource, he might not, at least for a time, have re-entered parliament; he might have been disgusted, reasonably enough, with the popular cause; a sense of wounded pride might have carried him into retirement, to become merely a spectator of scenes in which nature and practice had so eminently fitted him to act and to adorn. His services, which in number and in value exceed perhaps those of any two hundred country gentlemen who ever sat in Parliament put together, would have been lost to his country. Much also would have been lost, and this is no trivial loss, in national fame. Great men are a species of valuable public property, always the pride, often the chief stay and support of their country; the stars which enlighten and beautify her intellectual firmament, and by the numbers and radiance of whom her glory is raised and extended in the esteem of other nations. How many illustrious names might have been lost to the roll of English history, had it not been for the anomaly of close boroughs!

When he arrived at Bristol, previous to the election, a gentleman of that city, Mr. Noble, whom he particularly esteemed, tells an anecdote of the habitual disdain with which Mr. Burke treated what he called “loose libels,” and that strain of vulgar abuse so long directed against him, even when its contradiction promised to be useful to his interests.

The rumours of his being a Roman Catholic, of being educated at St. Omer’s, and others of the same stamp, had, it seems, reached Bristol after the riots in London, and being believed by many of the electors in a certain sphere of life, Mr. Noble† begged his sanction to write to Mr. Shackleton to receive from him, as his preceptor, a formal contradiction of them. The reply to this was a negative: “To people who can believe such stories,” said he, “it will be in vain to offer explanations.” His friend re-

\* John Adolphus, Esq.—History of England.

† The testimony of this gentleman, who continues to be the delight of his friends, is too flattering to the writer of this work as far as regards his sources of information, and too expressive of his own veneration for the memory of his illustrious friend, to be suppressed here.—

“I have read your ‘Life of Burke’ with very great satisfaction and thorough conviction of its correctness: for the trifling circumstances therein related, which occurred at my house so many years since, are accurate even to the very words; and the relation of them in your Memoir flatters me much, from the consideration, that in after ages my children’s children will feel proud that their forefather was honoured with the friendship of that great and good man.

“Believe me, dear Sir, your most humble Servant,

“JOHN NOBLE.”

peated the recommendation more pressingly: "If I cannot *live down* these contemptible calumnies, my dear friend, I shall never deign to contradict them in any other manner," was again the answer.

Some few years after, on a question which arose on the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, a passage to the same effect is contained in a letter written by him to a Member of the House of Commons:—"It would be a feeble sensibility on my part, which at this time of day would make me impatient of those libels, which, by despising through so many years, I have at length obtained the honour of being joined in commission with this Committee, and becoming an humble instrument in the hands of public justice."

"Loose libels," he remarked on a subsequent occasion,\* "ought to be passed by in silence. By me they have been so always. I knew that as long as I remained in public, I should live down the calumnies of malice, and the judgments of ignorance. If I happened to be now and then in the wrong, as who is not? like all other men I must bear the consequence of my faults and my mistakes."

Another anecdote of him, while at Bristol, is related by the same gentleman, regarding what his friend Fox probably thought one of his deficiencies. Passing an evening at Mr. Noble's house, his hostess in jest asked him to take a hand at cards, when he pleaded ignorance. "Come then, Mr. Burke," said she, playfully, "and I shall teach you," and he accepting the challenge in the same good humour, with a witty remark on the power of female temptation, they sat down to the children's game of *beggar my neighbour*. This turning out in his favour, he was so amused with the idea of conquering his instructress, as to rally her, with much effect, during the remainder of the evening.

An instance of his earnestness to serve unfriended merit, gave rise to an unusual scene, in which the characteristic affability of the first personage in the kingdom was displayed in a marked manner.

During Mr. Burke's stay at Mr. Noble's, a clergyman of high character, a friend of the latter, being resident in the house, he became so much pleased with his conversation and manners, that hearing he possessed only a poor curacy, he expressed his inclination, should it ever be in his power, to forward his interests. Some years afterwards, the living that he served, which was in the gift of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, becoming vacant, the clergyman applied to Mr. Noble to remind Mr. Burke of his promise. The latter replied, that being very little known to the illustrious personage in question, he could not expect much attention to be paid to his application; "but at any rate," said he

\* Letter to a Noble Lord, p. 8, 8vo. edit.



to Mr. Noble, "let your friend write himself, and I will present the letter." Mr. Burke accordingly had an audience at Carlton House, was received in the most gracious manner, and having presented his petition, it was acceded to in an instant in the handsomest manner. In the fulness of his heart, the orator, from the business of returning thanks, was betrayed into an animated discourse on the situation, interests, and duties of princes, till at length recollecting himself he abruptly ceased, with an apology for the liberty he had quite unintentionally taken. "No apology is necessary, my dear Mr. Burke," said his Royal Highness, graciously laying his hand upon his shoulder in the most condescending manner; "from your lessons we must all derive wisdom; and it is to be regretted that so few imitate your candour." "I cannot, however," said Mr. Burke, on repeating the circumstance to his friends, "forgive myself for the indecorum of which I think I was guilty; but the suavity of the gentleman made me forget my situation;—in addressing my Prince, I thought I was speaking to my son."

In the discussions at the India-House he sometimes took part, and in those of November this year respecting the appointment of a new governor to Madras, bore testimony to the talents and character of his old acquaintance Lord Macartney, who proved ultimately the successful candidate. On the 24th of this month, his son Richard, who had entered himself of the Middle Temple, in November, 1775, was called to the bar, and took chambers, intending to practise, which he continued for some years. Here more than one acquaintance of the writer of these pages had occasion to call upon him some time afterwards; he was a young man of talents much above mediocrity, the pride and delight of his father, whom he occasionally assisted in researches connected with parliamentary duty, and is said to have written "The Yorkshire Question;" a reply to Major Cartwright's plan of reform; and several letters and tracts in reference to the politics of the time.

In the session of 1780 and 1781, Mr. Burke took a leading part on the message announcing the rupture with Holland, Mr. Fox's motion respecting Sir Hugh Palliser's appointment to Greenwich Hospital, a proposal by Lord North to make the India Company pay a large sum for the renewal of their privileges, on the Budget, on the causes of the War in the Carnatic, on a Commission for examining the Public Accounts, on the Ordnance Estimates, on Mr. Hartley's Bill to restore peace with America, a motion by Mr. Fox for an inquiry into the conduct of the war, another by Mr. Minchin on the supposed neglect of 3000 British seamen, in Spanish prisons; followed by one by himself on the treatment of the people of St. Eustatius, by Sir George Rodney and General Vaughan, supported by all the Opposition; on the latter subjects, the humanity of his disposition

was complimented as being only equalled by the brilliancy of his genius.

In February, the Reform bill, or at least that branch of it relating to the civil list, was again introduced, in accordance with the solicitations of a variety of political associations, whose thanks and compliments flowing from many parts of the kingdom, formed some counterpoise to the ill-humour he had experienced at Bristol. Four able speeches were expended upon it in vain. Much of his illustration, and of his reasoning on the point were new; his reply is said to have surpassed every thing that could be conceived on a subject seemingly so exhausted; the encomiums on his labour, eloquence, and wit, even from the ministerial side, were unprecedented, and a common remark in the House was, "that he was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan of reform." Lord North, who was not the last to applaud, delayed for some days to give it a negative, though adjured by the mover to do so at once if he meant it, without giving further anxiety to him or to the House, and he, at least for one day in his life, "a decisive Minister." In support of the measure Mr. Pitt made his first speech in Parliament.

It was about this period that the kind feelings of Mr. Burke were appealed to by a young and friendless literary adventurer, subsequently an eminent poet, whose name on the present occasion it is unnecessary to mention, who, buoyed up with the praise his verses had received in the country, and the hope of bettering his fortune by them in London, had adventured on the journey thither, with scarcely a friend or even acquaintance who could be useful to him, and with no more than *three* pounds in his pocket. This trifle being soon expended, the deepest distress awaited him. Of all hopes from literature he was speedily disabused; there was no imposing name to recommend his little volume, and an attempt to bring it out himself only involved him more deeply in difficulties. The printer it appeared had deceived him, and the press was at a stand, from the want of that potent stimulus to action which puts so much of the world in motion. Hearing, however, or knowing something of an opulent Peer, then in London, who had a summer residence in his native county, he proposed to dedicate to him his little volume, and the offer was accepted; but on requesting a very small sum of money to enable him to usher it into the world, received no answer to his application. His situation became now most painful; he was not merely in want, but in debt; he had applied to his friends in the country, but they could render him no assistance. His poverty had become obvious, he said, to the persons with whom he resided, and no further indulgence could be expected from them; he had given a bill for part of his debt, which, if not paid within the following week, he was threatened with a prison; he had not a friend in the world to whom he

could apply; despair he added awaited him whichever way he turned.

In this extremity of destitution, Providence directed him to venture on an application to Mr. Burke. He had not the slightest knowledge of that gentleman, other than common fame bestowed; no introduction but his own letter stating these circumstances—no recommendation but his distress; but, in the words he used in the letter, "*hearing that he was a good man, and presuming to think him a great one,*" he applied to him, and as it proved, with a degree of success far beyond any possible expectations he could form. Mr. Burke, with scanty means himself, and unbribed by a dedication, did that which the opulent Peer declined to do with it; but this was not all; for he gave the young poet his friendship, criticism, and advice, sent some part of his family round to their friends to collect subscriptions for his work, introduced him to some of the first men in the country, and very speedily became the means of pushing him on to fame and fortune.

As a critic also, Mr. Burke was frequently called upon by authors for his opinion and correction, whenever they could procure an introduction to him, and many indeed without this customary preliminary; and about this time another candidate for poetic fame, the Rev. Mr. Logan, a Scotch clergyman, sent a present of a pleasing volume of poems, which was answered by a complimentary note, and an invitation to breakfast in Charles-street.

Another anecdote of his humanity, occurring nearly at the same period, was lately related by an Irish gentleman of rank who professed to know the circumstances, by way of contrast to the eccentric but mistaken kindness of an Irish philanthropist of our own day to one of the same class of unhappy objects.

Walking home late one evening from the House of Commons, Mr. Burke was accosted by one of those unfortunate women who linger out a miserable existence in the streets, with solicitations of a description which perceiving were not likely to have effect, she changed her style of supplication, and begged pecuniary assistance in a very pathetic and seemingly sincere tone. In reply to his inquiries, she stated herself to have been lady's maid in a respectable family, but being seduced by her master's son, had at length been driven through gradations of misery to her present forlorn state; she confessed to be wretched beyond description, looking forward to death as her only relief. The conclusion of the tale brought Mr. Burke to his own door; turning round with much solemnity of manner, he addressed her, "Young woman, you have told a pathetic story; whether true or not is best known to yourself; but tell me, have you a serious and settled wish to quit your present way of life, if you have the opportunity of so doing?" "Indeed, Sir, I would do any thing to quit it."—"Then come in," was the reply; "Here Mrs. Webster," said he to the house-



keeper, who lived in the family for about 30 years, "here is a new recruit for the kitchen; take care of her for the night, and let her have every thing suitable to her condition, till we can inform Mrs. Burke of the matter."—She remained a short time under the eye of the family, was then provided with a place, and turned out afterwards a well-behaved woman.

His playfulness of manner was scarcely less conspicuous than his humanity and good nature, as the following incident which occurred about this time will testify:—

Two strolling players and their wives, who paid frequent visits to the neighbourhood of Penn and Beaconsfield, chiefly on account of the liberal patronage of Mr. Burke, had acquired some celebrity from performing, by means of rapid changes in dress and considerable powers of mimicry, *all* the characters in the pieces which they represented. On one of these occasions a fox-hunter was to be exhibited, to whom a pair of leather small-clothes was deemed an indispensable article of dress, but unfortunately there was no such article in their wardrobe. In this dilemma, Mr. Burke, who was then at General Haviland's at Penn, and whose invention and assistance commonly contrived to overcome their difficulties, was applied to: for a moment he was at fault, but soon recollected that the identical garment formed part of his host's military costume. How to procure it, however, was the difficulty; to ask for it they knew would have appeared in the eyes of the owner a species of profanation: the old general was held fast in bed by the gout, the wardrobe stood close to the bed, and in this seemingly secure station was deposited the leathern indispensables. "Come, Dick," said Mr. Burke to his brother Richard, who equally enjoyed a jest of this kind, "we must out-general the general; you must be the decoy, and I shall be thief; attack the old soldier on his favourite military topic, lead him to the heights of Abraham, where his prowess was displayed with Wolfe, fight the battle, and slay the slain once more; and in the mean time if my fingers be nimble and my luck good, I shall be enabled to march off with the breeches."—This jocular scheme was successfully accomplished, and subsequently afforded a frequent topic for merriment to the visitors at Penn.

On another occasion, a strolling party at Beaconsfield had called at Butler's-court, to know what play their patron would be pleased to order; one of Shakespeare's was mentioned, when Mr. Burke inquiring of the manager, whether from the strength of his company reasonable justice could be done to the characters, some difficulty was started about one of them, an official personage, called in the play the Recorder. Just at that moment Richard Burke, then Recorder of Bristol, opened the door of the room, but observing a stranger in seeming conference with his brother, attempted to withdraw, when Edmund instantly and happily observed—"Here," said he to the Thespian hero, "is a gentleman

who will suit you exactly:—Come hither, Dick, we want you; or in other words, Mr. Manager, to speak with due theatrical correctness—‘Enter Mr. Recorder.’”

To these amusements he frequently treated all his servants for the benefit of the players, when their success in finding auditors had been indifferent; and by way of enhancing the treat, often sent them off in his carriage, and any other vehicles at hand, when he did not go himself. On one of these occasions, the house being literally emptied of all the establishment, save Mrs. Burke, two noblemen unexpectedly arrived from London, for whom she had not only to make tea, but to become cook and footman, by boiling the water herself, and by carrying the tea equipage to the drawing-room,—offices in which her noble guests very good-humouredly volunteered to assist; until at length one of the under gardeners appearing, relieved the hostess from her embarrassment.

In June 1781, the appearance of some Persees, sent from India in a diplomatic capacity, excited considerable notice in London, and being specially recommended to Mr. Burke, he carried them to visit the chief objects of curiosity in the metropolis, and among other places the House of Commons, and the King’s Levee. On the discussion of India affairs, partly connected with the mission of these persons, he addressed the following extract of a letter to Mr. (Sir William) Jones—

“I do not know I can justify myself in the liberty I take with you; but confiding in your humanity and condescension, I beg if you have leisure for it, that you would be so kind as to breakfast with me, and assist me with your opinion and advice on the conduct of the Bengal bill. The natives of the East, to whose literature you have done so much justice, are particularly under your protection for their rights. I have the honour to be, with the highest esteem and regard, dear Sir, your most faithful and obedient humble servant,

“EDM. BURKE.”

A motion by Mr. Fox also in June, of this year, to repeal the Marriage Act, excited particular notice, on account of bringing forward Mr. Burke as its chief opponent, the two friends supporting their respective views with extraordinary ability. Those of the former were considered too general and too philosophical for a practical statesman, who knew so much of the world, while the latter seemed to keep his eye more on facts, on the truth of his general principles, and on their application to the condition of society in this country. It was rejected without a division; and, in fact, Mr. Fox took up the matter from a family feeling,—the aversion shown by the Duke of Richmond’s family to his mother’s marriage with his father. Some of the ideas thrown out by the Member for Malton are said to have furnished a few hints to Mr. Malthus in his work on population.

It is amusing sometimes to look back and trace the contradictory

opinions entertained of statesmen,—the most vilified of all the animals in the creation—at different periods of their career militant, and the little credit they receive for the most honest opinions and conduct, when unwilling to go all lengths with the zealots of different parties. At this time the Tories considered Mr. Burke one of their most formidable adversaries, while some of the more violent Whigs thought him little better than half a Tory, verifying the line of Pope—

“ While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.”

The former occasionally hinted that he treated rank, wealth, and connexion, with too little ceremony; the other that he was too aristocratical in his notions for a bold and decided Whig. “ I admired, as every body did, the talents, but not the principles of Mr. Burke,” says Bishop Watson, writing of this particular period, and his reasons for questioning the latter are rather remarkable as coming from a bishop—“ His opposition to the clerical petition first excited my suspicion of his being a high Churchman in religion, and a Tory, perhaps an aristocratic Tory, in the state.”

Alluding to these accusations in the speech on the Marriage Act just mentioned, he gives the substance of those doctrines, which, having more fully illustrated ten years afterwards, he was then charged with having broached for the first time;—doctrines which teach no more than the strict preservation of all the rights of all the orders, high and low, in the state; and which, whether known to us as Whiggism or Toryism, contain the main principles of sound patriotism.

“ I am accused, I am told abroad, of being a man of aristocratic principles. If by aristocracy they mean the peers, I have no vulgar admiration, nor vulgar antipathy towards them; I hold their order in cold and decent respect. I hold them to be of an absolute necessity in the constitution; but I think they are only good when kept within their proper bounds. . . .

“ If by the aristocracy, which indeed comes nearer to the point, they mean an adherence to the rich and powerful against the poor and weak, this would indeed, be a very extraordinary part. I have incurred the odium of gentlemen in this House, for not paying sufficient regard to men of ample property. When indeed, the smallest rights of the poorest people in the kingdom are in question, I would set my face against any act of pride and power, countenanced by the highest that are in it; and if it should come to the last extremity, and to a contest of blood—my part is taken; I would take my fate with the poor, and low, and feeble.

“ But if these people come to turn their liberty into a cloak for maliciousness, and to seek a privilege of exemption, not from power, but from the rules of morality and virtuous discipline, then I would join my hand to make them feel the force which a



few, united in a good cause, have over a multitude of the profligate and ferocious."

To a new and brilliant recruit to the banners of Opposition, already rich in one department—and that an envied department—of fame, and with whom as a member of the Literary club he had been for some time acquainted, he is said to have given some friendly though disregarded advice on his first efforts in Parliament which were made in the course of this session.

This was the witty and ingenious Mr. Sheridan, who possessed of talents the most useful, and even splendid, only wanted industry to become equal to some of the greatest names of the age. Even as it was, indolent and dissipated, neglecting study and averse to business, his uncommon natural powers always placed him in the first rank. A good poet, he would not cultivate poetry; the first comic dramatist of the age, and almost in our language, he deserted the drama; a shrewd politician, he wanted that solidity of thought and conduct, which, after all, form the surest passports of public men to public favour; a powerful orator, he would not always cultivate that degree of knowledge which could alone render it effective and convincing in the assembly which he had to address. He was ready, shrewd, and remarkably cool in temper in debate, but like some advocates at the bar, whose example few prudent men would desire to imitate, he seemed often to pick up his case from the statements of the opposite side. Power, fortune, and distinction, all the inducements which usually work on the minds of men, threw out their lures in vain to detach him from pleasure, to which alone he was a constant votary.

With all these deductions, his exertions in Parliament were frequent and vigorous, and often very powerful; his wit and ingenuity never failed to amuse and interest, if they did not persuade; with greater preparation for parliamentary discussion, few could have produced a stronger impression. His speech on the Begum charge, of more than five hours' continuance, and considered one of the finest orations ever delivered in Parliament, drew from Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, compliments of a high and unusual order; and from the house generally, and the galleries—members, peers, strangers of all sorts by common consent—vehement shouts of applause and the unusual tribute of clapping of hands. With such powers, who but must regret their inadequate exercise, and unhonoured close? For it is melancholy to remember that this admired man, the friend of the great, the pride of wits, the admiration of senates, the delight of theatres, the persevering champion of his party for so many years, should at length be permitted to terminate his career in humiliating distress; adding another to the many instances too familiar to us, of great talents destitute of the safeguards of correct principle or ordinary prudence.

Inferior to Mr. Burke, to whom, at one time he professed to look up as a guide, in some natural gifts, in moral strength of character, in extent of knowledge, in industry, and mental activity, and in what may be termed, the very highest order of political genius, there were in their history several points of resemblance. Natives of the same country, they sprang from that rank in life which is compelled to work its own way to wealth or eminence. From the study of the law in England, they were both weaned by the attractions of general literature; and from this again, by the more animating bustle of politics; it was their fate to struggle the greater part of their lives in the up-hill path of Opposition for a momentary enjoyment of power, which was no sooner obtained, than it was as suddenly snatched from their grasp. Ill success, however, did not shake their constancy; disinterestedness was in an eminent degree a merit of both. For amid unparalleled shiftings of principle and of party, by men who had not the apology of stunted or embarrassed fortunes to plead, they continued faithful to their leaders; a fidelity not less honourable than remarkable, for it was imitated by few. In addition to these coincidences, the similarity may be carried a point further. Though always foremost in the support of their party, they rose superior to party feelings when the public safety seemed endangered—Mr. Burke on occasion of the riots in 1780; Mr. Sheridan during the mutiny at the Nore. The French Revolution misled the latter, as it did many other able and ingenious, though, perhaps, not very profound or reflecting men; and on this account, in the language of the former, they became “separated in politics for ever.”

A resolution of Congress to recall General Burgoyne from his parole in England induced Mr. Burke, at the solicitation of the latter, to address a letter to Dr. Franklin, then American Ambassador at Paris, in August, 1781, requesting his influence to get the order rescinded. The philosopher was more than usually polite in reply. “Mr. Burke always stood high in my esteem; and his affectionate concern for his friend renders him still more amiable;” expressing for him in another sentence what perhaps no other English statesman of any party enjoyed, “great and invariable respect and affection.”

In support of the amendment to the address, moved by Mr. Fox, November 27th, 1781, Mr. Burke uttered a bitter philippic against the principle as well as the conduct of the war. The figure of shearing the wolf, in allusion to the *right* of taxing America, which the minister still insisted on, made a very strong impression on the House; when, after descanting on our repeated losses and defeats, he went on to expose the folly of claiming rights which could not be enforced—

“But he must say a few words on the subject of these *rights*, which had cost us so much, and which were likely to cost us



our all. Good God! Mr. Speaker, are we yet to be told of the rights for which we went to war? Oh, excellent rights! Oh, valuable rights! Valuable you should be, for we have paid dear at parting with you. Oh, valuable rights! that have cost Britain thirteen provinces, four islands, a hundred thousand men, and more than seventy millions of money! Oh, wonderful rights! that have lost to Great Britain her empire on the ocean, her boasted, grand, and substantial superiority, which made the world bend before her! Oh, inestimable rights! that have taken from us our rank among nations, our importance abroad and our happiness at home; that have taken from us our trade, our manufactures, and our commerce; that have reduced us from the most flourishing empire in the world, to be one of the most compact, unenviable powers on the face of the globe! Oh, wonderful rights! that are likely to take from us all that yet remains!

“What were these rights? Can any man describe them? Can any man give them a body and soul, a tangible substance, answerable to all these mighty costs? We did all this because we had a right to do it; that was exactly the fact—‘And all this we dared to do because we dared.’

“We had a right to tax America, says the noble lord, and as we had a right, we must do it. We must risk every thing, forfeit every thing, think of no consequences, take no consideration into view but our right; consult no ability, nor measure our right with our power, but must have our right. Oh, miserable and infatuated ministers! miserable and undone country! not to know that right signifies nothing without might, that the claim without the power of enforcing it was nugatory and idle in the copyhold of rival states, or of immense bodies of people. Oh! says a silly man full of his prerogative of dominion over a few beasts of the field, there is excellent wool on the back of a wolf, and therefore he must be sheared. What! shear a wolf? Yes. But will he comply? Have you considered the trouble? How will you get this wool? Oh, I have considered nothing, and I will consider nothing but my right; a wolf is an animal that has wool; all animals that have wool are to be shorn, and therefore I will shear the wolf. This was just the kind of reasoning urged by the minister, and this the counsel he had given.”

The omission in Lord Cornwallis's capitulation of any article to secure the American loyalists serving in the British army from the vengeance of their countrymen, formed another topic of indignant reproach with Mr. Burke. Next day he returned to the charge with undiminished spirit; followed in a few days by two renewals of the motion respecting St. Eustatius; a general feeling existing that the people of that island had been unjustifiably treated, which the heavy damages afterwards awarded by



juries against the commanders, naval and military, served to confirm.

Shortly afterwards he presented a petition to the House, privately conveyed to him, written on the blank leaf of an octavo volume with black lead pencil (pen and ink being denied him), from Mr. Laurens, American Envoy to Holland, who, being captured on his passage, had been committed to the tower a year before; the seeming rigour of the case exciting all his sensibility, the cause of the prisoner was taken up with such warmth, that he was liberated on bail shortly afterward, and soon exchanged for General Burgoyne. On this occasion (Dec. 3rd), an unusual degree of courtesy was shown him by the House; for not being in his place when the private business had concluded, and Mr. Fox saying he was sure his honourable friend had not departed from his intention, it was agreed to await his arrival rather than proceed to other business.

Several of the politicians of Ireland being in the habit of occasionally consulting him on the public measures adopted there, Lord Kenmare at this moment solicited his opinion on a bill then in progress for the alleged relief of the Roman Catholics, particularly in matters of education; to which he replied in a letter\* dated 21st of February, 1782, soon after published without his consent in the Irish metropolis. This piece, occupying thirty octavo pages, which has all his accustomed force and perspicuity, was written amid a multiplicity of business, public and private, allowing him so little leisure that it was said to be dictated sometimes while eating a family dinner, sometimes while dressing, or even engaged in familiar conversation.

In public he was occupied, after the recess, in supporting some motions of Mr. Fox against Lord Sandwich and the Admiralty Board; on the employment of General Arnold as "a rebel to rebels;" on the Ordnance estimates; in an able reply to the new American Secretary (Mr. Welbore Ellis); on General Conway's motion, February 22nd, for terminating the war with the colonies, which reduced the Ministerial majority to one; and on Lord John Cavendish's motion of censure on Ministers, March 8th.

In animadverting on the difficulty of proposing new taxes (March 6th) he observed with his accustomed felicity of satire, that on looking over the blessed fruits of Lord North's administration, he found the country loaded with ten new taxes—beer, wine, soap, leather, horses, coaches, post-chaises, post-horses, stamps, and servants; recollecting that he had omitted sugar in this enumeration, he remarked, that since St. Christopher's was lost, and Barbadoes and Jamaica must probably follow, the omission was of small importance, as we should soon have no sugar to tax.

"What fresh burdens can the Noble Lord add to this taxed

\* Burke's Works, vol. vi., p. 269.

and taxing nation? We are taxed in riding and in walking, in staying at home and in going abroad, in being masters or in being servants, in drinking wine or in drinking beer; in short, in every way possible.”\*

“But viewing the account,” he continued, “in a mercantile form, he must confess that for a hundred millions of money, we had purchased a full equivalent of disaster. If we were debtor by less in that sum of money, we were also creditor by less in a hundred thousand men, thirteen continental provinces, besides St. Vincent’s, Grenada, Dominica, Tobago, St. Christopher’s, Senegal, Pensacola, and Minorca, worth, at a moderate computation, four millions and a half annually.”

When at length this long and arduous political struggle terminated (19th March, 1782), by the resignation of the Ministry, amid the triumphant shouts of Opposition, he afforded an example of moderation by checking the too clamorous joy of his friends, and reminding them how many difficulties they had to encounter; how necessary it was to guard against their own favourite desires, opinions, vanity, love of power, or emolument; how much the public expected from them; and how much they stood pledged to achieve; in which recommendation he was seconded by General Conway, another amiable and moderate man.—Recollecting the dictation which Mr. Fox often wished to assume in the deliberations of the party, it is difficult to believe that this lecture was not chiefly meant for him; from a misgiving in the mind of his coadjutor (so truly verified by the result) that his rashness, or impatience of superior lead or influence, would ultimately ruin the party.

A letter from Dr. Franklin, on the subject of the exchange of Mr. Laurens for General Burgoyne, drew from Mr. Burke the following characteristic letter, the morning of the first decisive expression of opinion by the House of Commons against the continuance of the American war:—

“Dear Sir,

“Your most obliging letter demanded an early answer. It has not received the acknowledgment which was so justly due to it. But Providence has well supplied my deficiencies; and the delay of the answer has made it much more satisfactory than at the time of the receipt of your letter I dared to promise myself it could be.

“I congratulate you as the friend of America, I trust as not the enemy of England, I am sure as the friend of mankind, on the resolution of the House of Commons, carried by a majority of 19, at two o’clock this morning, in a very full House. It was the declaration of 234; I think it was the opinion of the whole. I

\* This idea was dilated into an amusing article which appeared some time ago in a celebrated periodical work devoted to criticism.

trust it will lead to a speedy peace between the two branches of the English nation, perhaps to a general peace; and that our happiness may be an introduction to that of the world at large. I most sincerely congratulate you on the event.

“ I wish I could say that I have accomplished my commission. Difficulties remain. But, as Mr. Laurens is released from his confinement, and has recovered his health tolerably, he may wait, I hope, without a great deal of inconvenience, for the final adjustment of this troublesome business. He is an exceedingly agreeable and honourable man.\* I am much obliged to you for the honour of his acquaintance. He speaks of you as I do; and is perfectly sensible of your warm and friendly interposition in his favour. I have the honour to be, with the highest possible esteem and regard, dear Sir,

“ Your most faithful and

“ Obedient humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ London, Charles Street, Feb. 28th, 1782.”

It may be remarked, as another proof of Mr. Burke's kindness of disposition, that he had, as he said, until very recently, no personal acquaintance with General Burgoyne. On the second debate (December 17th) the General said—

“ Gratitude did not come up to the true magnitude of the feelings he experienced towards him (Mr. Burke), and he revered him the more because he knew the real source of his attachment to proceed principally from a generous concern for the unfortunate, and a disinterested feeling for the oppressed and persecuted. *He considered the friendship of the honourable gentleman as the greatest blessing, as well as the greatest honour, that had ever happened to him in his life.*”

About the same time, General Conway, on another subject, gave utterance to a nearly similar expression of sentiment, by saying, “ that he had an esteem for the honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) perhaps superior to any he felt for any other man whatever.”

\* This character is believed to have been just, being distinguished afterwards in his native country for uncommon disinterestedness and contempt for the common scrambling after place and power, too common even in republican America. He resided after the peace chiefly on his estate; and on his death, in 1792, desired his body to be burned to ashes in his garden by nine favourite Negroes, which was accordingly done.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Appointed Paymaster General—Reasons for not being in the Cabinet—Letters to Lord Charlemont—Lord Shelburne—Coalition—Reports of the Select Committee on Bengal—Communication on the Arts to Barry—India Bill—Mr. Pitt—Mr. Burke elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow—Scotsmen—Character of his Epitaph on Sir G. Saville—Reception in the new Parliament—General Haviland and family—Jeu d'Esprit of Dean Marlay—Letter to Miss Shackleton—Anecdotes.

THUS had terminated the most hard and ably-fought party contest in our history, and with it virtually the war in which it originated; but it did not leave Mr. Burke, as it found him, undisputed leader of his party.

Mr. Fox, his political pupil and friend, who had been for some time treading closely on his heels in Parliament, and who had now advanced to an equality in the conduct of business there, and to superior popularity out of doors, finally took the lead. For this there were some obvious reasons. Inferior to his tutor, as a great and commanding orator, and what ought to be of more consequence to the country—as a wise and sound statesman, he frequently excelled most men in vigour of debate; but more especially possessed a peculiar tact beyond all his contemporaries and all his predecessors without exception, for being at the head of a political party. He enjoyed all the weight which birth and connexion (and these are essential objects among the Whigs of England) could give: his acquaintance with the great was necessarily extensive, and his friendships nearly as general; with the young, by community of pursuits and pleasures, with the old and staid, by community of information and talent. His fortune originally was considerable, had it not been squandered, his temper in general easy, his thirst for popularity excessive, his manners adapted to gain it, and his sacrifices to ensure it; his very faults and weaknesses were with many more matter of jest and favour than of censure. Some of his doctrines were more to the taste of the people, who placed confidence in his sincerity; and with scarcely a shilling he could call his own, they were pleased to think him in spirit the most independent.

In all these points he had the advantage over his coadjutor, who also suffered some loss of weight by his rejection at Bristol, by his disregard of the popular voice when he thought it ill-directed, by a more uncompromising temper, by being supposed a dependant of Lord Rockingham, and, among a certain class, by being a native of Ireland. There was unquestionably a jealousy through life of the merits and influence of Mr. Burke, even among many who advocated the same cause, which nothing but very uncommon powers and exertions enabled him to surmount, and of which he frequently complained. Under all these disadvantages, however, he had kept the effective lead in the Commons for ten years; and, had Lord

North fallen three years sooner, would have been made efficient Minister; the common opinion, early expressed at the table of Lord Rockingham, being, that "he was the only man who could save the empire from dismemberment." Even just before that Minister's resignation, he himself remarks he had obtained a considerable share of public confidence, notwithstanding the jealousy and obloquy which had assailed him during much of his career. "I do not say I saved my country—I am sure I did my country much service. There were few indeed that did not at that time acknowledge it."

That Mr. Fox should now prevail, with Westminster at his back, with unbounded popularity in the nation, and the advantage of that aristocratic feeling in his favour, obviously inherent in the public mind on all public matters, forms no cause for surprise. Mr. Burke, who considered humility in the estimate of ourselves a species of moral duty, submitted to the sense of his party without a murmur. A vain man would have resented this; a weak one complained of it; an ambitious or selfish one probably taken advantage of it on the first opportunity to quit the connexion for ever, and throw the weight of his name and talents into the opposite scale.

In the division of the spoil of office, his share was a seat in the Privy Council, and the Paymaster-Generalship of the Forces, then the most lucrative office in the State, and remarkable for having been held by Lords Chatham, Holland, North, and Charles Townshend, previous to their becoming first Ministers. Considerable surprise was expressed at his not being included in the Cabinet; one reason assigned for which was his desire to purge the office in question of its acknowledged impurities, though the real one perhaps was the necessities of his party, which required the Cabinet offices for men of greater family and Parliamentary interest, though of far inferior talents; and also it should be added, for the gratification of Lord Shelburne and his friends, who enjoyed a much larger share of the royal favour. It is also true that Mr. Burke drove no bargain on the subject for himself, expressing to his friends sentiments similar to those of a great statesman of the present day,\* namely, his willingness to serve his country, not where ambition might dictate, but where the general interests of government required. His moderation will be still more esteemed, when it is known that the chief arrangements for the new Administration were committed to his direction by the Marquis of Rockingham. To this he alluded three months afterwards on the discussions produced by the elevation of the Earl of Shelburne to the head of the Treasury.

After all it may be doubted whether this moderation, forbearance, disinterestedness, or by whatever other name it may be

\* Right Hon. George Canning—Speech at Liverpool, September, 1822.

designated, was not misplaced. Those who affect humility in political consequence will commonly be taken at their word by their associates; and an attentive inquirer will find that Mr. Burke constantly made this mistake throughout his public life. The pride of the Whig Aristocracy indeed had scarcely begun, as it has been well said, to *thaw* during the most active part of his career, and he was therefore perhaps constrained to give way to the more potent influence of birth and family influence; but whiggism was, and no doubt deserved to be, injured by the arrangement:—on the present occasion he ought, beyond doubt, to have been in the Cabinet, and had he insisted upon it, a seat could not well have been refused. The omission certainly hurt his political reputation among many who could not know or appreciate the generosity of the sacrifice he had made; and even at the present day it is ignorantly urged as a kind of reproach, that though far superior in talents to any member of the Cabinet except Mr. Fox, he submitted to accept of an inferior office in administration.

Politics, however, unlike literature, is seldom a Republic. Party is Monarchy in miniature, where each must keep an appointed station for the benefit of all, and where other circumstances, such as great popularity, high rank, property, or weight in the country, independent of talents, must combine to constitute a chief suitable to the popular taste.

But were a man in this country, of great capacity and attainments; though of little influence or fortune, such for instance as Mr. Burke himself was, deliberately to choose his side in politics as he would a profession—that is, for the advantages it is likely to bring—he would probably not be a Whig. That numerous and powerful body is believed to be too tenacious of official consequence to part with it to talents alone—and too prone to consider high rank, leading influence, and great family connexion, rather than abilities of humbler birth, as of right entitled to the first offices of government. They are willing indeed to grant emolument, but not to grant power, to any other than lawyers, who do not materially interfere with their views on the chief departments of government; an opinion which, notwithstanding the profession of popular principles, is believed to have made them sometimes unpopular in the great market of public talent, and to have driven many useful allies into the ranks of the Tories.

His majesty, on the change of administration, received his new servants unwillingly, nor is it great matter for surprise. It is hard for any man, and most of all perhaps for a king, to receive into his confidence and councils those who for nearly twenty years together have thwarted his most favourite views. So strong was the aversion in his mind to the Rockinghams, that Lord



Shelburne, leader of another branch of Opposition, was offered the Treasury before it was offered to the Marquis, but feeling the want of sufficient weight and connexion in Parliament, he prudently declined it. Lord Rockingham, in consequence, insisted, before he accepted of office, upon certain stipulations, which were—to concede independence to America, to introduce a system of economy into all the departments of the State, and to carry some popular bills through Parliament.

The ministerial labours of the Paymaster-General were more considerable than those of any Member of the Cabinet. His Reform Bill, though much mutilated, passed both Houses, as he found, what most reformers in time discover, that it is easier to propose public correctives when out of office, than to carry them into effect when in. Many good reasons, indeed, were assigned for the alterations; and as the measure even then stood, no similar purgation of ministerial influence by one measure is known in our history, thirty-six offices eligible to be held by Members of Parliament being at once abolished. He also declared his readiness, whenever the sense of the House would go with him, to adopt every part of the plan he had first proposed.

The bill to regulate his own office was deemed a species of feat in ingenuity, labour, and knowledge of business; the system being so complicated, and the abuses so ancient, that a universal feeling prevailed among preceding Paymasters, down to the lowest clerks in the establishment, of the hopelessness of the one being simplified, or the other amended. He nevertheless succeeded in his object chiefly by the assistance of Messrs. Powel and Bembridge, surrendering to the public the interest and other advantages accruing from the enormous sum of 1,000,000*l.*, which was not unfrequently the amount of the Paymaster's balance in hand. His disinterestedness did not stop there. As treasurer of Chelsea Hospital he became entitled to the profits of clothing the pensioners, amounting to 700*l.* per annum, and, by a new agreement with the contractor, managed to save 600*l.* more; these sums, which, as regular perquisites of office, might have been enjoyed without impropriety or notice, he generously threw into the public treasury. It will scarcely be credited, that by this reform of the office, 47,000*l.* per annum were saved to the public, of which sum 25,300*l.* were the usual and avowed perquisites of the Paymaster, which all his predecessors constantly received. Considering his pecuniary circumstances, these were no ordinary sacrifices, and they gained from the country at large, and from Parliament, just as much credit as such things voluntarily given usually do—little notice and no recompence.

He agreed in the propriety of opening the negociation with Holland, in a variety of censures passed by Mr. Dundas on the Government of India, and in conceding independence to the Irish

Parliament, expressing in the following letter to Lord Charlemont some ingenious sentiments in his usual (especially in epistolary writing) elegance of manner:—

“ My dear Lord,

“ The slight mark of your Lordship’s remembrance of an old friend, in the end of your Lordship’s letter to Lord Rockingham, gave me very great satisfaction. It was always an object of my ambition to stand well with you. I ever esteemed and admired your public and private virtues, which have at length produced all the effects which virtue can produce on this side of the grave, in the universal love of your countrymen. I assure you, my Lord, that I take a sincere part in the general joy; and hope that mutual affection will do more for mutual help, and mutual advantage, between the two kingdoms, than any ties of artificial connexion whatsoever. If I were not persuaded of this, my satisfaction at the late events would not be so complete as it is. For, born as I was in Ireland, and having received, what is equal to the origin of one’s being, the improvement of it there, and therefore full of love, and I might say of fond partiality for Ireland, I should think any benefit to her, which should be bought with the real disadvantage of this kingdom, or which might tend to loosen the ties of connexion between them, would be, even to our native country, a blessing of a very equivocal kind.

“ But I am convinced, that no reluctant tie can be a strong one, and that a natural cheerful alliance will be a far securer link of connexion than any principle of subordination borne with grudging and discontent. All these contrivances are for the happiness of those they concern; and if they do not effect this, they do nothing, or worse than nothing. Go on and prosper; improve the liberty you have obtained by your virtue, as a means of national prosperity, and internal as well as external union.

“ I find that Ireland, among other marks of her just gratitude to Mr. Grattan (on which your Lordship will present him my congratulations), intends to erect a monument to his honour, which is to be decorated with sculpture. It will be a pleasure to you to know, that, at this time, a young man of Ireland is here, who I really think, as far as my judgment goes, is fully equal to our best statuaries, both in taste and execution. If you employ him, you will encourage the rising arts in the decoration of the rising virtue of Ireland; and though the former in the scale of things, is infinitely below the latter, there is a kind of relationship between them. I am sure there has ever been a close connexion between them in your mind. The young man’s name who wishes to be employed is Hickey.\* I have the honour to be,

\* Another instance of Mr. Burke’s kindness; he had already brought forward a poet and painter of celebrity, and now wished to do the same by a sculptor, but

with the highest sentiments of regard and esteem, my dear Lord,  
 “Your Lordship’s most obedient servant,  
 “EDMUND BURKE.

“Whitehall, June 12th, 1782.”

When the news arrived of the great naval victory in the West-Indies, he declined to renew the inquiry against the commander-in-chief, respecting St. Eustatius, saying, that on public grounds he had brought it forward, and on public grounds, if the House thought proper, he would let it drop; and then, after a beautiful apostrophe to the laurel crown of the Romans, concluded by adding—“If there were a bald spot on the head of Rodney, he would willingly cover it with laurels.”

By the persuasions of Mr. Fox, who had promised all his influence to the popular cause, and who afterwards took much credit to himself with the people of Westminster for the fact, Mr. Burke did not attend a discussion on Parliamentary Reform, which, in accordance with his known opinions, he must have opposed;—making a sacrifice in this instance, to the popularity of his friend’s name, which he never made to his own.

Administration, on the whole, did much for popularity, and would probably have succeeded in their aim to acquire it, when the Marquis of Rockingham, who had been seized with a prevailing complaint of the time named influenza, unexpectedly died. Lord Shelburne, without any intimation to Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Lord John Townshend, or others of the party attached to the deceased nobleman, instantly vaulted from the Home Department into the vacancy; and they, unable or unwilling to act with him, immediately resigned.

This, which has been usually considered a hasty measure, certainly did not meet with general approval; but there is no foundation for an assertion made by some, who profess to have known something of the political secrets of the time, that it arose chiefly from the irritation of Mr. Burke. The suggestion on the contrary, came from Mr. Fox, whose importance, from the situation which he held in administration, was more directly affected by that event: while it is undoubtedly true that both, while they disagreed with the new head of the Treasury on some public points, entertained a strong dislike to the private character of the man: and he in return is said to have felt quite as cordial an aversion to them.

The origin of this hostility, particularly between Mr. Burke and the new Premier, which was of long continuance, it is difficult to trace, but arose probably from some peculiar, perhaps unconstitutional, sentiments to which his Lordship had occasionally

he died young. A good bust of Mr. Burke, by him, is in existence. It was the property of his relative, Thos. H. Burke, Esq., and has been presented by him lately to the British Museum.



given utterance in the House of Peers, and some of which Mr. Burke quoted afterwards more than once in order to condemn—to alleged inconsistencies which had occurred when he was in office before—and perhaps to something which Mr. Burke might have heard of him from his friend Mr. Lauchlan Maclean, when the latter was his Lordship's Under Secretary in 1768.

That the feeling of the Noble Lord and his friends towards the late Paymaster was not less marked, was obvious on the 9th of July, when Mr. Fox having justified the line of conduct he himself had pursued, and being replied to by general Conway, who, with others of their friends, had *not* resigned, Mr. Burke rose to support Mr. Fox, and was met with violent confusion and noise at the bar. For a moment he felt some emotion, arising from delicacy, as he said, to one part of the House, and the most sovereign contempt towards the other; but those who by the present unaccountable tumult seemed dissatisfied with his conduct, knew where to find him.—Adverting to the Marquis of Rockingham, he said he was a man of clear head and pure heart, and his successor was directly the reverse—a man of all others the most unlike him;—adding, after a variety of strong animadversions, (rather a strange species of apology)—“that he meant no offence, but would speak the honest conviction of his mind;—If Lord Shelburne was not a Catiline or a Borgia in morals, it must not be ascribed to any thing but his understanding.”

The following letter to his cousin Mr. Nagle, gives us among other matters, another, and not much less unfavourable portrait of Lord Shelburne, though drawn at an earlier period.

“My dear Garret,

“I do most heartily wish myself with you. I should wish it even if I were not put in mind, by this burning weather, of the breezy mountains, shady woods, and refreshing waters of Killarney. We have got a summer at last, and it is paying off its arrears of heat, with compound interest; indeed, I long sincerely to see you; and if I were not held by various ties, and engaged in various occupations (though neither very pleasant nor important); and if I were as rich, as, I thank God, I am still healthy and active, I should this summer pay you a visit in your wood-house, that is to say, if you would deign to receive so humble a person, after all your great and titled guests. If I see Lord Kenmare, I shall certainly thank him for his civilities to you. I certainly am as much pleased with them, as if they were offered to myself, and indeed, a little more. My acquaintance with Lord Winchelsea is very slight; but I have known Lord Pembroke, pretty intimately, for some time. We may meet this summer, and we shall talk you over. I wish you had named me to him.

“What you say of Lord Shelburne is more important. I very well remember your application to me some time ago; I remember

too, that I mentioned it to Colonel Barré. Nothing further came of it; I believe that agency was not vacant when you wrote. Between ourselves, and I would not have it go farther, there are, I believe, few who can do less with Lord Shelburne than myself. *He had formerly, at several times, professed much friendship to me; but whenever I came to try the ground, let the matter have been never so trifling, I always found it to fail under me.* It is, indeed, long since he has made even professions. With many eminent qualities he has some singularities in his character. He is suspicious and whimsical; and perhaps, if I stood better with him than I do, perhaps my recommendation would not have the greatest weight in the world. This, I mention, as between ourselves. In the mean time, if an opportunity occurs, I shall do the best I can for you. I hope I am not inattentive to my friends to the best of my power; and let me assure you that I have ever looked upon you as a friend, whose ease and welfare I have at heart as much as the interest of any person whatsoever."

This nobleman, with very considerable talents, extensive information, and, perhaps, a better acquaintance with the foreign relations of the country than Mr. Fox, who filled that department, had, unfortunately for himself, acquired a character of political bad faith. He had been designated a Jesuit, and nick-named *Malagrida* for some years; and in other points report had long been busy with his character; he was accused of insincerity, of absolute duplicity, and even of want of common veracity toward his colleagues, to which, on the present occasion, some slighter circumstances gave countenance, though it is but justice to observe, the more serious charges were never proved. It is not a little remarkable likewise, that the unknown writer of Junius's Letters seems to have had a similar aversion to him, for in recommending portraits of the Ministry to the caricature pencil of Lord Townshend, (Miscellaneous Letters, No. 5, Sept. 16, 1767, Woodfall's edition) he gives loose to his licentious satire on Lord Shelburne, who was then Secretary of State for the Southern Department, in the following strain:—

"There is still a young man, my Lord, who I think will make a capital figure in the piece. His features are too happily marked to be mistaken. A single line of his face will be sufficient to give us the heir apparent of Loyola and all the College. *A little more of the devil, my Lord, if you please, about the eye-brows; that's enough; a perfect Malagrida I protest!* So much for his person; and, as for his mind, a blinking bull-dog placed near him will form a very natural type of all his good qualities."

By the friends of his Lordship the revolt of the Rockinghams was ascribed to petulance; to the disappointed ambition of Mr. Fox; to the desire of Mr. Burke to place the Duke of Portland at the head of the Treasury, and to consequent discontent at finding the Earl's influence in the highest quarter so much greater



than their own. Of this superior influence, there had been already abundant proofs given them; particularly in his being offered the Treasury, as already stated, in preference to the Marquis; in securing, almost unknown to that nobleman, the Order of the Garter for himself, a heavy pension for Colonel Barré, a peerage, a pension, and the unusual honour of a seat in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, for Mr. Dunning, both his intimate friends and chief supporters in the House of Commons; besides an understood obligation on the part of Mr. Burke, at least for the present, to let the cutting-edge of his Reform Bill glance harmless over the Duchy in question, now placed under the guardianship of his friend.

The pension to Colonel Barré exciting animadversion some time afterward in the Commons, his Lordship urged that it was the proposal of Lord Rockingham himself, in lieu of the Pay-office, which he wished to give to Mr. Burke; and that he had the letter in his pocket in which the offer was made. Mr. Burke and Lord John Townshend peremptorily denied any such arrangement in the strongest manner, called the story an utter fabrication, and dared him to produce the letter;—the letter never was produced. Mr. Fox, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Lee, reiterated the charge of breach of veracity on other points. These circumstances account, in some measure, for Mr. Burke's increased aversion to the new Minister; for that he thought his own motives pure there is no doubt, as he could not, he said, give a stronger instance of sincerity, than, with a small fortune and large family, to sacrifice a lucrative office to public principle. And to the moment of the Usher of the Black Rod arriving to summon the House to hear the prorogation, he did not cease from strong animadversion.

On the re-assembling of Parliament, December 5th, 1782, he assailed the speech and its authors, on that and the following days, "in a vein of wit, argument, and satire, so finely blended, and so powerfully carried on," to use the words of the reported debates of the time, "that the House was kept in a burst of laughter the whole time;" and, at other times, particularly a few days afterward, varying his attack by invective or serious argument. On the former occasions, Mr. Pitt, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, though personally complimented more than once, was nettled by the wit of Mr. Burke into some petulant and even angry remarks.

Lord Shelburne, who had in the recess signed the preliminaries of peace, discovering his deficiency in Parliamentary strength, deputed Mr. Pitt toward the end of autumn, to wait personally on Mr. Fox in the last private interview these eminent men ever had with each other, in order to attempt a reconciliation. The latter, however, would not hear of his lordship remaining at the head of the Treasury. On the contrary, he preferred a junction with



Lord North, who, by the numbers still attached to him in the House, held the balance between Ministry and Opposition; and who by throwing his weight into the latter scale, formed that celebrated coalition which, by the vote of the 21st of February condemning the peace, threw out the Ministry, and succeeded to their places. The Paymaster-General resumed his office; his brother Richard, from a practising barrister, became one of the secretaries to the Treasury, and, on the death of Lord Ashburton, Recorder of Bristol.

Part of the odium of forming this amalgam of parties fell upon Mr. Burke, though with little justice; for though he concurred in it as a matter of necessity, he neither interfered much with the arrangements, nor defended it with his accustomed vigour; and had, in fact, strongly objected to it, till overpowered by the persuasions of Mr. Fox, who was both eloquent and urgent with him on the occasion. In the debate of the 17th of February, 1783, on the preliminary articles of peace, in reply to Mr. Powys, who stigmatised the coalition, Mr. Burke said, there was nothing heterogeneous in such an alliance, if any such had been formed—which he had yet to learn; a sufficient intimation that he knew nothing of the first steps taken in it. If it be true that Lord Shelburne himself had previously made overtures to Lord North for the same purpose, Opposition might consider it as only fighting the minister with his own weapons.

Mr. Eden, afterwards Lord Auckland, is known to have been the first proposer, and direct mediator, in forming the coalition. Lord John Townshend, always distinguished for the strictest principle and integrity, avowed himself with pride one of the authors of it; Lord Loughborough recommended it; Mr. Sheridan, though doubtful at first, ultimately approved it; Colonels North and Fitzpatrick conducted the negotiation to a successful conclusion; Mr. Fox himself nobly said, that his friendships were eternal, his enmities only momentary; and after 40 years' experience and reflection, Lord Erskine\* has found nothing in it to condemn. The true secret of the unpopularity of the coalition probably was the subsequent attempt to carry the India bill.

Whatever share, therefore, belongs to Mr. Burke, in the business of the coalition—and it certainly was not great—he acted under the unanimous feeling of the leading Members of his own party, and of all the Members of that with which they joined. He had, in fact, fewer reasons for avoiding it than Mr. Fox. Once or twice, indeed, he had threatened Lord North with impeachment; at other times, however, he paid many compliments to his personal integrity and amenity of manners, while the Minister, as if to evince the propriety of the latter compliment, often rendered

\* A few hours after this was written, the death of this distinguished lawyer was announced in the newspapers.

justice to the splendid powers of his adversary, even in moments when most severely assailed by him; and in the earlier periods of his power, kind offices had not unfrequently passed between them. The dislike of Mr. Burke was political, pointing solely at the Minister; that of Mr. Fox was not only political, but personal to the man. He had said, that that Minister's blood ought to expiate his misdeeds—that he was the greatest criminal in the State—that he would be afraid to trust himself with him alone—and that, if he ever acted with him he would be content to be thought for ever infamous; intemperate and inconsiderate assertions which his own generous nature was the first to condemn. For using them, Lord North frankly forgave him; for recanting them, the public never did.

One of the first acts of the Paymaster-General, and for which he incurred considerable censure, was to restore Messrs. Powell and Bembridge, cashier and accountant of the office, who had been dismissed by Colonel Barré for alleged mal-practices. His benevolent feelings\* in this instance mastered his prudence. The truth was, he did not believe them personally implicated in guilt from the unreserved disclosures they had made to him of the affairs of the office; he conceived it also a design on the part of Lord Shelburne and his friends, to lessen the popularity of Mr. Fox by throwing imputations on the memory of his father, whose accounts formed the subject of dispute; and a still stronger reason was, that by their assistance and theirs alone he had accomplished the reform of his office.

In a debate (March 27th) on Williams's Divorce bill, he again differed from Mr. Fox on a question, which, like that of the Marriage Act, might be termed the politics of morals. A clause had been introduced by Lord Ashburton in the upper House, bastardizing the issue of women convicted of adultery, born after separation from the husband. Mr. Fox opposed it strongly. Mr. Burke supported it, with what the reported accounts describe as "wonderful force;" giving his friend perhaps a hint on the score of morals, by sarcastically observing "that though no friend himself to divorces for insufficient causes, he remarked that most of the difficulties started upon them, came from bachelors, men, strangers to the nice feelings of husbands, and to the aggravating sensations which the injured honour of married men could alone feel."

He opposed on the 7th of May, in an excellent speech, Mr. Pitt's motion for Parliamentary Reform. The latter took an opportunity of retaliating upon him, on an accusation advanced against the Paymaster of altering and expunging clauses according to his own taste, in a bill connected with his office; and

\* It is also true, that the clerks of the office wrote to him stating their inability to get through the business of the department, unless those gentlemen were restored.

though the Speaker pointed out the misconception of the Member who made the charge, Mr. Pitt clung to it with some pertinacity as a handle for censure;—so little do statesmen in opposition differ, when the object is to criminate the more fortunate possessor of power.

It was at this period that he drew up the Ninth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons for inquiring into the administration of justice in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa—a well digested, comprehensive, and instructive document, occupying 262 octavo pages, and dated 25th of June, 1783.

It embraces the state of the Company as it then stood; the commerce of the whole of India, under the heads of internal and external; and the government exercised under the charter and under the different acts of parliament, considered in relation to the same heads of internal and external departments.

The conduct of Mr. Hastings, on a variety of occasions, some of which were subsequently formed into charges against him, comes under animadversion; and the curious history is given of offering his resignation as Governor General, in 1776, through his agent, Mr. Maclean, whom he had expressly sent home for this among other purposes; and when he found this surrender was unexpectedly accepted, utterly disclaiming such resignation—the authority of his agent for giving it—his own hand-writing containing his instructions to that effect—and even the testimony of two of his personal friends (Mr. Vansittart, and Mr. John Stewart) witnesses of the directions given to Mr. Maclean.

The Eleventh Report of the same Committee, drawn up in the same year, and relating chiefly to Mr. Hastings's alleged corrupt receipt of presents, is also the production of Mr. Burke. It is a shorter, though not less able, paper than the former, filling above eighty octavo pages, but rendered bulky, as originally published, by the number of appendices of official documents. Both pieces might have been meant as precursors of the India Bill, in order to impress the public mind with the conviction of the necessity for a change.

So diversified were his powers, and so ready his means of throwing them out upon all subjects, that in the midst of these important investigations and serious contentions, he found time, as is pretty well ascertained, to address the following judicious and interesting though anonymous paper to Barry, containing free but friendly criticisms on his great pictures, then exhibiting in the rooms of the Society of Arts. The ability shown by the writer interested the painter so much, that he eagerly returned an answer, as directed, to the bar of the Cocoa Tree, in Pall-Mall, soliciting personal acquaintance or further correspondence with so competent a critic. No rejoinder was ever made, nor the actual author positively known, but adding to his acknowledged love for



the arts, the regard shown for the individual to whom it was addressed, with the internal evidence of style and matter, the writer could be no other than his great patron. His reasons for not avowing himself were probably a desire to avoid unprofitable personal argument with an intractable spirit such as the painter was ; or to prevent any increase of that unreasonable jealousy felt by the latter at his intimacy with Sir Joshua Reynolds, from whom he might think the observations addressed to him, came. Of this jealousy, Barry, who was in temper the Rousseau of painters, could not divest himself, thinking his patron's friendship for the great artist of the age a degree of neglect shown to his own fame and merits.

“ TO JAMES BARRY, ESQ.

“ PROFESSOR OF PAINTING, ROYAL ACADEMY.

“ Sir,

“ As you have submitted your works to public inspection before they are finished, in order to avail yourself of any observations which may be made upon them, I conclude that any individual who offers you his opinion generally, and in detail, and his reasons for entertaining that opinion, will not only do you a real service, but likewise act towards you with that kindness and civility which it becomes every member of the community to observe towards a man who has certainly laboured with very meritorious zeal and industry to serve it. This all must allow, whatever their opinion may be of your success, though I think there can hardly be two opinions concerning your work, considered generally and with relation to its main design. It certainly surpasses any work which has been executed within these two centuries, and considering the difficulties with which the artist has had to struggle, any that is now extant.

“ As I flatter myself that these difficulties are now at an end, I shall consider the work abstractedly from them, as a great effort of modern art, which, from its splendid and substantial merits, is likely to have a great influence upon the taste of the times, and in this light is of general importance, and demands the attention of every individual to contribute as much as he can to render it perfect, as it is well known that trivial errors are of great consequence in great men and great works, for those imitators who cannot reach their merits will surpass their faults. As you have explained your own principles, I shall in the first place make a few observations upon them, as being of more importance than the execution of your work ; the faults in the latter affect only artists as great judges of art ; but faults in the former affect the whole community when they come from persons of high reputation.

“ Your distinction between abstract ideal character and beauty, and imitative, is undoubtedly just, but I think you carry it too far when you depreciate the one to raise the other. So far from

setting them at variance, it behoves every friend to the art to endeavour to evince the necessity of uniting them. Without the power of combining and abstracting, the most accurate knowledge of forms and colours will produce only uninteresting trifles; but without an accurate knowledge of forms and colours, the most happy power of combining and abstracting will be absolutely useless; for there is no faculty of the mind which can bring its energy into effect, unless the memory be stored with ideas for it to work upon. These ideas are the materials of invention, which is only a power of combining and abstracting, and which, without such materials would be in the same state as a painter without canvas, boards, or colours. Experience is the only means of acquiring ideas of any kind; and continual observation and study upon one class of objects, the only way of rendering them accurate.

“The painter who wishes to make his pictures (what fine pictures must be) nature elevated and improved, must, first of all, gain a perfect knowledge of nature as it is; before he endeavours, like Lysippus, to make men as they ought to be, he must know how to render them as they are: he must acquire an accurate knowledge of all the parts of the body and countenance; to know anatomy will be of little use, unless physiology and physiognomy are joined with it, so that the artist may know what peculiar combinations and proportions of features constitute different characters, and what effect the passions and affections of the mind have upon these features. This is a science which all the theorists in the world cannot teach, and can only be acquired by observation, practice, and attention. It is not by copying antique statues, or by giving a loose to the imagination in what are called poetical compositions, that artists will be enabled to produce works of real merit, but by a laborious and accurate investigation of nature upon the principles observed by the Greeks; first, to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the common forms of nature, and then, by selecting and combining, to form compositions according to their own elevated conceptions. This is the principle of true poetry, as well as of painting and sculpture. Homer and Shakspeare had probably never seen characters so strongly marked as those of Achilles and Lady Macbeth; at least, we may safely say, that few of their readers have, and yet we all feel that these characters are drawn from nature, and that if we have not seen exactly the same, we have seen models or miniatures of them. The limbs and features are those of common nature, but elevated and improved by the taste and skill of the artist. This taste may be the gift of nature, the result of organization; and the skill may be acquired by habit and study; but the ground works, the knowledge of limbs and features, must be acquired by practical attention and accurate observation.

“And here, Sir, that portrait painting which you affect so much

to despise, is the best school that an artist can study in, provided he studies it, as every man of genius will do, with a philosophic eye, not with a view merely to copy the face before him, but to learn the character of it, with a view to employ in more important works what is good of it, and to reject what is not. It was in this view that the great painters of the Roman and Bolognese schools collected such numbers of studies of heads from nature, which they afterwards embellished and introduced in their pictures, as occasion required. Hence that boundless variety which is observable in their works; the want of which is the only material fault of your great and masterly picture of the Olympic Victors.

“I do not mean to recommend to the historical painter to make his works an assemblage of caricatures, like those of Hogarth, and some of our present artists; but as there is scarcely any character so insipid that a Shakspeare or a Fielding would not have been able to discover something peculiar in, so there is scarcely any countenance so vacant but that there are some trifling features which may be of use to a skilful and ingenious artist; though it seldom or ever happens that any character of countenance is sufficiently strong and perfect to serve of itself for the hero of a poem or picture, until it has been touched and embellished by the fostering hand of the poet or painter.

“Portrait painting may be to the painter what the practical knowledge of the world is to the poet, provided he considers it as a school by which he is to acquire the means of perfection in his art, and not as the object of that perfection.

“It was practical knowledge of the world which gave the poetry of Homer and Shakspeare that superiority which still exists over all other works of the same kind; and it was a philosophic attention to the imitation of common nature (which portrait painting ought to be) that gave the Roman and Bolognese schools their superiority over the Florentine, which excelled so much in theoretic knowledge of the art.

“I was the more sorry to see any censures drop from you on this branch, because it will give little snarlers an opportunity of saying, that with a spirit of pedantry common to all arts and sciences, you censure what you cannot attain. I am one who think you can attain it, if you would turn your attention that way; and I sincerely wish you would, because there is no doubt but that, if you possessed the imitative powers only in the degree which Mr. Gainsborough does, added to the poetical taste and genius which now animate your works, you would be the first artist that has appeared since the revival of arts. It was in the combination of these two powers that Annibal Caracci excelled; you have indisputably surpassed him in one, and it will be your own fault if you do not rival him in the other.



“ I entirely agree with you that the rage of the inhabitants of this country for having their prizes perpetuated, whether they are worthy of it or not, is one great obstacle to the advancement of art; because it makes that branch more profitable than any other; and therefore makes many men of great talents consider it as the ultimate object of their art, instead of the means of that object.

“ But there is another error on the contrary side, not less fatal, which is the contempt our young artists are apt to entertain for the lower detail of nature, and the forward ambition which they all have of undertaking great things, before they can do little ones—of making compositions before they are acquainted sufficiently with the constituent parts. We are told that many ancient artists bestowed their whole lives upon a single composition. Such was Apollodorus who made the Laocoon, and Lysimachus who made the famous Hercules, destroyed by the Crusaders at Constantinople in the thirteenth century, together with many more of the sublimest productions of Grecian art and genius. We are not to suppose that these great artists employed so many years in chipping one block of marble, but that the greatest part of the time was employed in studying nature, particularly the vast and intricate branches of physiology and pathology, in order to enable them to execute perfectly the great works which they had conceived.

“ These sciences are in a manner neglected by the moderns, but the author of the Laocoon was as deeply skilled in them as Haller or Gaubius, and hence he has been able to give that consistency of expression which prevails through the whole body, from the face through every muscle, to the ends of the toes and fingers. I was once told by a person who had spent many years in experiments and investigations of this kind, that every discovery he had made disclosed to him fresh beauties in the wonderful group of Laocoon, and that to understand it thoroughly would require to know more of the human body than most of anatomists attempt to know. It is not enough to know the forms, positions, and proportions, of the constituent parts of the animal machine, but we should know the nice changes that are produced in them by the various affections of the mind, grief, agony, rage, &c. Without this we may produce splendid compositions and graceful figures, but we shall never approach that perfection to which the ancients arrived. A perfection, to which, I fear, the very constitution of modern society is an insurmountable obstacle. Such a minister as Pericles might, perhaps, overcome it, but considering the present system of education, it is scarcely possible that such an one should appear. To distinguish between what is good and what is bad falls to the lot of many, but to distinguish between barely good and what is truly excellent falls to the lot of few, and it very rarely happens that any

of these few are kings and ministers, who are able and willing to reward an artist for giving up his whole time to one object, which he must do, if he means to make it truly excellent.

“There is another erroneous principle which is extremely general in the present age, and is a principal cause of our faulty taste. This is the confounding greatness of size with greatness of manner, and imagining that extent of canvas, or weight of marble, can contribute towards making a picture or statue sublime. The only kind of sublimity which a painter or sculptor should aim at, is to express by certain proportions and positions of limbs and features, that strength and dignity of mind, and vigour and activity of body, which enable men to conceive and execute great actions: provided the space in which these are represented, is large enough for the artist to distinguish them clearly to the eye of the spectator, at the distance from which he intends his work to be seen, it is large enough.

“A space which extends beyond the field of vision, only serves to distract and mislead the eye, and to divide the attention. The representation of gigantic and monstrous figures has nothing of sublimity either in poetry or painting, which entirely depend upon expression. When Claudian describes a giant taking a mountain on his shoulders, with a river running down his back, there is nothing sublime in it, for there is no great expression, but merely brute strength; but when Homer describes Achilles advancing to the walls of Troy, clad in celestial armour, like the autumnal star that brings fevers, plagues, and death; we see all the terrible qualities of that hero, rendered still more terrible by being contrasted with the venerable figure of Priam, standing upon the walls of Troy, and tearing his white hair at sight of the approaching danger. This is the true sublime—the other is all trick and quackery. Any madman can describe a giant striding from London to York, or a ghost stepping from mountain to mountain, but it requires genius, and genius experienced in the ways of men, to draw a finished character with all the excellencies and excesses, the virtues and infirmities of a great and exalted mind, so that by turns we admire the hero and sympathize with the man—exult and triumph in his valour and generosity, shudder at his rage, and pity his distress. This is the Achilles of Homer, a character every where to be seen in miniature, which the poet drew from nature, and then touched and embellished according to his own exalted ideas. Had he drawn him with great virtues and great abilities, without great passions, the character would have been unnatural, and of course uninteresting; for a vigorous mind is as necessarily accompanied with violent passions, as a great fire with great heat.

“The same principle which guided Homer should guide the painter in studying after nature. He should attempt to copy and not to create, and when his mind is sufficiently stored with mate-

rials, and his hand sufficiently exercised in art, then let him select and combine, and try to produce something superior to common nature, though copied from it. But let him not imagine that because he can produce great things, he can therefore produce good things, or that when he has covered a great extent of canvas with bold and hasty sketches, he has produced a fine picture or sublime composition. Such works, compared with the beautiful and animated little compositions of the Bolognese school, put me in mind of Claudian's battle of the giants compared with Virgil's battle of the bees. In the former, all the objects are vast, but the action and expression extravagant and absurd, and the whole cold and uninteresting. In the latter, the objects are minute, but the action and expression bold and animated, and the whole together warm, clear, and spirited. I have seen a large cartoon copied from the little picture of the Vision of Ezekiel, by Raffaele, in which the copyist thought, without doubt, to expand and illustrate the idea of the author; but by losing the majesty of the countenances, which makes the original so sublime, notwithstanding its being in miniature, his colossal copy became ridiculous instead of awful.

“It is with great concern that I have observed of late years this taste for false sublime gaining ground in England, particularly among artists. I attribute it in great measure to certain compositions, which have been extolled by interested prejudices, and admired by credulous ignorance, for no other reason than because they were not understood. Few readers take the trouble of judging for themselves, so that when a work is ushered into the world with great pomp, and under the sanction of great names, its real merits are examined only by a few, the generality being content to admire, because it is the fashion to admire. If the work under these circumstances be pompous and unmeaning, its success is sure, as its pomp dazzles, and its vacancy puzzles, both which are admirable ingredients to procure respect.

“This, I think, is the true way to account for the applause and admiration that have been given to those miserable rhapsodies published by Macpherson, under the name of Ossian. They were ushered into the world with great pomp, as the productions of an ancient bard, and recommended by the respectable authority of Dr. Blair, aided by all the national prejudice of the Scotch. Few, therefore, were willing to allow that they disliked them, and still fewer bold enough to declare their dislike openly. Hence they have been received by many as standards of true taste and sublimity, which the author modestly declared them to be. The consequence of this was corrupting all true taste, and introducing gigantic and extravagant tinsel for easy dignity and natural sublimity. I attribute this false taste to these poems, because I see so many artists who have been working from them; all of whose works are tainted with it; and, indeed,



it can hardly be otherwise, as the poems themselves (for so they are improperly called) are nothing but a confused compilation of tinsel and fustian, such as any one might write who had impudence enough to publish.

“Fashionable authors have great influence upon the taste of a nation; Seneca and Lucan certainly corrupted that of the Romans; and Homer as certainly formed that of the Greeks. Before his time Sidon was the country of the arts, as he himself frequently mentions; but, as soon as that spirit of true taste, elegance, and sublimity, which he had breathed into them began to operate, they infinitely surpassed all other nations. The shield of Achilles contains all the beauties of picturesque composition which have ever been imagined; and Phidias owned that whatever expression of majesty he had been able to give to his Jupiter, was owing to Homer.

“Why will not our modern artists continue to search this rich and inexhaustible mine, instead of copying the fantastic ideas of every *ignis fatuus* who catches the attention of the day? We have an excellent translation, or rather paraphrase, for those who cannot read him in his own language; and it cannot be said that his subjects are hackneyed, as few of the moderns have worked after him, and the works of the ancients have mostly perished. I am persuaded that understanding Homer well, especially in his own tongue, would contribute more towards perfecting taste than all the metaphysical treatises upon the arts that ever have or can be written, because such treatises can only *tell* what true taste is, but Homer every where *shows* it. He shows that the true sublime is always easy and always natural; that it consists more in the manner than in the subject, and is to be found by a good poet or good painter in almost every part of nature.

“Could this truth be once established, I think a great obstacle to the advancement of the arts would be removed; but while a prejudice prevails that great works must be of great size, and that sublime compositions cannot exist but in great space, it is impossible such compositions should be often attempted; for the size of the rooms and the manner of furnishing them, necessary to make houses comfortable in a northern climate, exclude very large pictures. This prejudice is of modern growth, for the immoderate size of the pictures of Polygnotus at Delphi was never looked upon as worthy of imitation in the more polished ages of Greece, but only to be defended on account of the vast variety of poetical beauties introduced by the genius of the artist. The finest works of Apelles and Zeuxis were either single figures, or compositions which did not exceed three, or at most, five figures.

“Having extended these observations much farther than I at first intended, I shall defer entering into a detail of your work until I know your sentiments of what I have already written,

which if you think worth while, you will direct to R. J. L., at the Cocoa Tree, Pall Mall."

The recess of Parliament was devoted to the concoction of the celebrated India bill, of which Mr. Burke is said to have been a joint penman with the reputed author, though this has never been proved. It is certain indeed that he was the only one of the Ministry who knew much of the matter while in progress previous to its coming before the public, and it is also certain that it was submitted to his revision; he might likewise have been the author of the second or supplementary bill, ascertaining the powers of the new government, and securing the rights and interests of the natives; but all the great and leading principles were undoubtedly those of Mr. Fox.

A writer,\* however, who must ever claim a great share of public attention, seems, by the following account, to be of a contrary opinion—

"It is to Mr. Burke that the first daring outline of the plan, as well as the chief materials for filling it up, are to be attributed—whilst to Sir Arthur Pigot's able hand was entrusted the legal task of drawing the bill. The intense interest which Burke took in the affairs of India had led him to lay in such stores of information on the subject, as naturally gave him the lead in all deliberations connected with it. His labours for the Select Committee, the ninth Report of which is pregnant with his mighty mind, may be considered as the source and foundation of this bill. \* \* \*

"Burke was indeed at this time the actuating spirit of the party—as he must have been of any party to which he attached himself. Keeping, as he did, the double engines of his genius and his industry incessantly in play over the minds of his more indolent colleagues, with an intentness of purpose that nothing could divert, and an impetuosity of temper that nothing could resist, it is not wonderful that he should have gained such an entire mastery over their wills, or that the party who obeyed him should so long have exhibited the mark of his rash spirit imprinted upon their measures. The yielding temper of Mr. Fox, together with his unbounded admiration of Burke, led him easily, in the first instance, to acquiesce in the views of his friend, and then the ardour of his own nature, and the self-kindling power of his eloquence, threw an earnestness and fire into his public enforcement of those views, which made even himself forget that they were adopted from another, and impressed upon his hearers the conviction that they were all, and from the first, his own."

This statement, involving Burke as the actual, Fox the nominal, and Sir Arthur Pigot as legal father and guardian of the bill, had first appeared in a volume published four years ago, among other

\* Moore's Life of Sheridan, p. 287—8, 4to, edit.

mistatements and prejudices directed against Mr. Burke; but the pen of the writer being then found as ponderous as his tongue had formerly proved to another auditory, the death of this production was nearly simultaneous with its birth. The story it told, however, rests upon no sufficient foundation; no proof of the circumstance is adduced; and our credence is required merely to an assertion proceeding from the suspicious quarter of an avowed political enemy. Besides, the writer of the preceding passage, who, though of a very different stamp of intellect from the first propagator of the story, and uninfluenced by any thing like malice, will be suspected, perhaps, to be affected with similar political partialities, adds no matter of fact in corroboration of the anecdote. Mingled with that admiration of Burke, which every lover of genius, of talents, or of moral character must ever feel for him, a keen observer will probably discover in the latter part of the quotation I have given, a strained effort of ingenuity to prove that Mr. Fox *fancied* the measure was his own—that he acquiesced in *believing* he had suggested the plan—that his natural ardour *misled him* on this point—and that the *self-kindling* of his eloquence *forced* him to suppose that the materials used in the composition were collected and assorted by himself.

The origin of all this ingenious but cobweb theory, is the persevering endeavours used by the warm followers and friends of Mr. Fox, to throw off from his shoulders the burden of all the political mistakes he committed upon those of any one fitted to bear them; and Burke, as the moving spirit of the party, is usually singled out as this Atlas of error. No reflecting man, however, will be influenced by this partial distribution of what a staunch modern Whig may consider *political justice*; for in the nature of things it cannot be correct, except we suppose that Mr. Fox had not, or did not exert, an understanding and a *will* of his own—points which those who attended to his general conduct or the usual tenacity of his opinions, will not for a moment believe.—That Burke assisted in the formation of the India bill; that he gave his opinion on parts of it; that he revised other parts; and that he consequently knew more of it while in its dormant state than most others of the ministry, are matters already admitted. But there is not a single fact on which to ground a belief of his being the original projector of the measure, or a probability of his proposing the more daring and arbitrary, and consequently obnoxious parts of it.

Examining likewise either his preceding or subsequent opinions, it will be readily admitted, that the prominent and innovating features of the plan bore little resemblance to the usual cautious legislation of one, who always entertained a strong distrust of great and sudden changes in modes of government, and was therefore little likely to propose the entire subversion of one; a sentiment which he particularly advanced during the debates.



Neither is it probable, that he who was never accused of egotism on other questions, should on this become so laudatory on what, if the allegation were true, must have been so much indebted to his own hand. In addition to this, it may be observed, that in a debate in 1793, on the question of voluntary gifts to government and enrolments of volunteers, upon the propriety of which he differed in opinion with Mr. Fox, he said, in reply to some allusion to similar events about the end of the American war, that the mind of that gentleman was so much taken up at the period in question with his India bill, that he could attend to nothing else. Such an assertion in the House of Commons, when they were no longer intimate, would scarcely have been hazarded, had he himself been equally concerned. It must also be remembered that the high eulogium he passed on the character of Fox in his great speech on the bill, was mostly in allusion to his being the *author* of it.

The motives indeed which dictated this important measure, however misrepresented at the time, ought no longer to be matter of doubt among intelligent men. It is the idlest of all things in a country like England, to talk of a preconcerted scheme to overawe the King, to annihilate the prerogative, to render the voice of the people nugatory, or to fix any ministry whatever perpetually in place; assertions which may serve a momentary purpose to render a body of political rivals unpopular, but are unworthy of the pen of history; and their best refutation is to be found in the circumstances that followed the attempt to carry this very bill. The administration of the government of India, in many points, could not well be worse conducted than it had been. Its proceedings for more than 20 years together had called forth constant animadversion in Parliament, and in the nation; and frequent inquiries and discussions there, as well as in Courts of Justice, had elicited facts so little creditable to our sway, as to become a source of reproach with foreigners upon our national fame and character for justice. Nothing could be more self-evident than the necessity for some reform, as the passing of Mr. Pitt's bill soon afterwards, and the additions made to it from time to time, proved.

The *mode* of reform now attempted was quite another matter. It bore the stamp of a great, an energetic, an inventive, but an arbitrary mind. It imparted to the legislature a new power unknown to the constitution, that of appointing the Commissioners who were to exercise the functions of government over that vast Continent: it annihilated with little preface or apology the chartered rights of the India Company: took from it the management of its property by open force; offered no compromise; soothed no objections or prejudices; and attempted no conciliation; the principle itself, and the mode of carrying that principle into effect, were equally objectionable. It was distinguished by another

striking and unprecedented peculiarity—for it had the effect of uniting the King and the people for the first time against a majority of the House of Commons.

Mr. Burke, of course viewing the measure through a different medium, urged its success with all his powers. He reserved himself chiefly for the second reading, the 1st of December, 1783, when, in a crowded House prepared to hear something uncommon, he delivered one of those surprising orations, which, in vigour, in ingenuity, and in that forcible yet expansive grasp with which he usually fastens on a subject, seemed to leave the energies of other men far behind.

Disclaiming several questionable arguments urged by some Ministerial members, in its support, his reasoning turns principally on the necessity of the measure—the breach of the articles of its charter by the Company, and consequently, as in other agreements, the nullity of the compact—the enormous abuses of power by the Company's servants—the utter inability for a series of years to correct these abuses, by remonstrance, or censure, or execration; by the voice of the nation, by the voice of Parliament, by the voice of the Directors of the Company themselves, by the voice of many of the highest servants of that Company on the spot where the abuses were committed. It was only from a conviction that the system was wholly incorrigible by less lenient means, that he, for one, would ever lend his hand to the subversion of that or any other established mode of government. The present bill, he said, would guard against future robberies and oppressions, and its highest honour and title would be that of securing the rice in his pot to every man in India.

“The most ignorant individual in the House,” says a contemporary member, “who had attended to the mass of information which fell from the lips of Burke on that occasion, must have departed rich in knowledge of Hindostan. It seemed impossible to crowd greater variety of matter applicable to the subject into smaller compass; and those who differed most widely from him in opinion, did not render the less justice to his gigantic range of ideas, his lucid exposition of events, and the harmonic flow of his periods.”

“The speech of Mr. Burke,” in the words of another contemporary, “upon this grand turning point of the Administration, was perhaps the most beautiful, sublime, and finished composition that his studies and his labours had produced.”

While his zeal and eloquence assisted to propel the bill through the Commons, he was seen along with Mr. Fox, standing on the steps of the throne in the House of Lords, during the discussion there, anxious and agitated, striving by the influence of personal character and talents to do the same service in that assembly which he had done in the lower House. Other and superior influence, however, was also at work. The King, more alarmed

for his authority than perhaps the occasion required, exerting his natural weight among the Peers, caused the bill to be thrown out, and immediately flung the Ministry after it, by a message to the Secretaries of State at one o'clock in the morning of the 19th of December to deliver up the seals of office: and thus this famous measure, upon which so much labour and talent had been expended, became the lever by which to prize its authors out of office.

Offensive, or unjust, or imprudent as the design may have been, it is not perhaps generally known that this plan for seizing upon India as a direct possession of the Crown was originally the suggestion of another and perhaps greater Minister, quite as bold, as ambitious, and as decided in character as Mr. Fox himself. This was no other than the great Lord Chatham. Mr. Burke said more than once, that to his personal knowledge his Lordship in 1766 and 1767, seriously contemplated the total dissolution of the territorial power of the East India Company as a *government* in India, and the assumption of it by the legislature of Great Britain, leaving to the Company only an exclusive, or nearly exclusive, right to the trade of that country. A similar design has been laid to the charge of the late Lord Melville in 1781; or at least that he *hinted* at the necessity of such a measure, from the inability of the Government at home to controul effectually the proceedings of the local authorities in India. The fact however is by no means brought home to the latter. Yet were it true, it does not follow that his scheme, or that of Lord Chatham, would have contained the offensive clauses which created such alarm and aversion toward the bill of Mr. Fox.

The three months' struggle which ensued between Mr. Pitt, who accepted the Treasury, and the Opposition who constantly outvoted, censured, and threatened him with even weightier proofs of disapprobation, has little to do with the personal history of Mr. Burke, who exerted himself less on this than on any other great emergency of his political life. He probably felt the force of the difficulty so apparent at the very threshold of the discussion—that the King had an undoubted right to choose his own Minister, and against the Minister so chosen no specific offence could be alleged; the weight of the argument, therefore, was against the supporters of the party. It is also true that he always thought and always said that Mr. Pitt had worked himself into office unfairly, if not unconstitutionally.

Mr. Fox fought this unprecedented political battle with uncommon skill; and Mr. Pitt kept his ground with equal ingenuity, courage, and perseverance, backed indeed by the favour and exhortations of his Majesty, who had taken so strong an antipathy to the former gentleman, that sooner than again receive him as first minister, he had expressed a determination to quit England for Hanover. Perseverance rendered this singular resolution



unnecessary, for the Opposition majority gradually dwindling from 54 to 1, Parliament was dissolved in March 1784; and the new elections running everywhere in favour of Ministry, attended by every symptom of popular sympathy and satisfaction, no less than 160 of their opponents were thrown out, under the name of "*Fox's Martyrs*."

Mr. Pitt, who accomplished this victory of the King's will over all the leading interests of the country, was one of those rare examples of men who, by the union of uncommon talents with peculiar good fortune, seem cut out by nature to influence or to govern kingdoms. He was a lucky man, however, before he became a great one; for his good fortune placed him in a station which, at his period of life, and little acquaintance with the public, he had no reason to expect; and his talents enabled him to maintain the important post which he had thus gained. It was an unprecedented occurrence in this, or perhaps any other European country, to see almost a boy placed at the head of public affairs; to see him snatch it from grey-headed experience and unquestioned fame; to retain it from youth to manhood, and from manhood to the borders of age, with no diminution of royal or popular favour, rendering the State, in more than one sense, a species of patrimonial inheritance.

In looking back to the first few, and of course more inexperienced years of his administration, it is impossible not to admire the skill, the mingled prudence and moderation, with which it was even then conducted. He had to provide a government for India, to revive trade, to arrange for the payment of the public debt, to regulate and increase the revenue, and to restore many other national interests nearly ruined by the American war. He had to face in Parliament a combination of by far the ablest men this country ever saw; sometimes indeed in vehement contention, sometimes anticipating, sometimes bending to their suggestions, but commonly holding the even tenor of his way so wisely, that they had few substantial opportunities for finding fault. To uphold him, indeed, he enjoyed in an unusual degree the patronage of the people and the King; yet without such a firm hold upon either, on the ground of established reputation or of previous services, as to be certain of its continuance, without the exertion on his own part of great political dexterity. Taken as it were upon trial, he had his character to acquire. His father's name, indeed, was a tower of strength upon which he securely reckoned, and doubtless it proved the first and readiest passport to public esteem.

To both King and people it was obviously necessary for him, by the nature of the ground on which he stood, to pay assiduous court, and he did this without any seeming art or effort, oscillating to one side or the other as circumstances required; in favour with both, yet subservient to neither, though exposed occasionally to the accusation of insincerity. If to the popular side he gave his

vote, to the other he was charged with lending his secret influence—a charge certainly unjust; yet, even if true, the former might be an assertion of principle, the latter possibly an unavoidable sacrifice to expediency, which every Minister, and almost every man, must occasionally make in his connexion with office or with the world. Up to the period of the French Revolution he had an arduous part to play in Parliament, and he played it well; after that event, by the imprudence of the Opposition in their admiration of the proceedings in that country, he gained an accession of strength which fixed him more firmly in his seat than ever. His manners were somewhat distant, with neither the amenity of Fox nor the frankness of Burke. His moral character stood high; his prudence—the better part of talents perhaps as well as of courage—was felt; his personal disinterestedness experienced and acknowledged; his rectitude of intention universally believed. Altogether, the estimation in which he was held as a public and private man, carried him through even the disasters of the French war with little decrease of popularity.

His eloquence was that of business—precise, logical, singularly fluent, with a command and choice of the very best words, hatched into the very best places, which the most gifted men rarely possess, and to which a tall figure and fine toned voice gave irresistible effect. It was deficient, however, in variety, in splendour, in felicity of illustration, in what may be termed those flashes of genius, which not only throw light on an intricate and difficult point, but sometimes succeed in cutting the knot of a sophism, which cannot be clearly unravelled; it dealt little in classical quotation or allusion, though he was an excellent classic; it did not seem so much the emanation of a vast and comprehensive, as of a bounded but admirably regulated intellect, and which probably caused Burke once to call him “the sublime of mediocrity.” There is in it little of passion, and few of those overwhelming bursts which surprise us frequently in Burke, and sometimes in Fox; in all these respects he was perhaps inferior to both, particularly to the former, and more especially in wit and sarcasm (though his sarcasms were frequent and bitter), and in vigour and fertility of imagination. He adheres indeed closer to the point than either, but on the whole warms and interests us less, possibly from the position he held compelling him to stand so much upon the defensive. At the same time there was in his speeches a simplicity and seeming integrity of manner that won confidence to what he said; and, besides being more brief than those of his great rivals, he possessed the still greater merit in the eyes of a cautious politician—that of never committing himself too decidedly; of not saying too much or too little on doubtful points; of being able at any time, as some one remarked, to deliver “a King’s Speech off-hand.” Few had more power over the House of Commons, where his speeches told with great effect. But

although of a quite different character from those of his father, they are likely to share the same fate as literary compositions—that is, never to be consulted a second time for any extraordinary originality of thought, exhibitions of genius, or the very highest attributes of eloquence.

In the new Parliament, which met in May, 1784, the chief effort of the late paymaster was in moving (June 14th) a representation to the King on the late dissolution; a “paper,” said Mr. Fox, some years afterwards, “which would make the fame of some men, but which in the number and excellence of Mr. Burke’s productions was, perhaps, scarcely remembered.”

On the 16th of June, on Alderman Sawbridge’s motion for a committee to inquire into the state of the representation, which was supported by Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, the Earl of Surrey, and others of his own friends, in addition to Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke opposed it in a very powerful speech, followed by Mr. Dundas, Lord North, Mr. W. W. Grenville, and Lord Mulgrave—exhibiting, by this question, a complete disjunction of the usual party opinions.

In discussing Mr. Pitt’s India bill, he predicted several of its inefficiencies in a manner which a very competent judge of the matter,\* in a passing tribute to his memory as one of the wisest men and greatest orators of our country, says has been realized to the letter.

He was not viewed, however, with much favour by many of the new members of the House. In common with Mr. Fox, he had incurred considerable odium, but, unlike him, had taken no pains to work it off. His habits being more retired, he did not now or at any time sufficiently court intercourse and familiarity with one class of society, or the bustle and noisy freedom, the shaking of hands, and hoisting upon shoulders of another; the latter in fact, were not much to his taste. So strong was the prejudice, or, as it was considered, combination chiefly of the younger members, against him in the House, that the moment of his rising became a signal for coughing, or other symptoms of pointed dislike, by men who had no chance of success in contending against him in any other manner.† The speech introducing the representation to the king was not replied to, and towards its conclusion was received with affected laughter. On three India questions of minor moment, whether owing to the unpopularity of himself, or of the subject, he was almost overpowered by continued and violent vociferation. And on another of these occasions, instead of threatening, like a distinguished modern leader ‡ of Opposition not long ago when similarly

\* Sir John Malcolm—Political History of India.

† The present Lord Rolle is said to have led this new band of orators, for which the *Rolliad* inflicted upon him exemplary punishment.

‡ Right Honourable George Tierney.



assailed, "to speak for three hours longer," he stopped short in his argument to remark, that "he could teach a pack of hounds to yelp with more melody and equal comprehension."

At another time, having occasion to rise with papers in his hand, a rough-hewn country gentleman, who had more ear perhaps for this *melody of the hounds* than for political discussion, exclaimed with something of a look of despair, "I hope the Honourable Gentleman does not mean to read that large bundle of papers, and bore us with a long speech into the bargain." Mr. Burke was so swoln, or rather so nearly suffocated with rage, that utterly incapable of utterance, he ran out of the House. "Never before," said the facetious George Selwyn, who told the story with great effect, "did I see the fable realized—a lion put to flight by the braying of an ass."

*Muzzling the lion* was in fact the colloquial term used at the time for these attempts to prevent him from speaking; and as several of Mr. Pitt's younger friends were among the principal actors concerned, the minister was accused of promoting it. It is certain that he then thought him his most formidable opponent, chiefly on account of the variety of his powers, which made it difficult to give him, what Mr. Fox's more straight-forward mode of attack commonly received, a complete answer, and not unfrequently it ruffled his (Mr. Pitt's) temper. The same reason, that of "muzzling the lion" towards himself, has been assigned for the minister allowing the inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Hastings to go on, after having in the first instance decidedly put his face against it.

An able anonymous writer\* of that day expresses his surprise at the indecorous interruptions "given to a man possessed of an eloquence with which all that remains of antiquity must lose in the competition;" but the truth was, they had been so frequent towards other popular men, that on a motion by Sir George Saville, a session or two before, the curious spectacle was exhibited of the Speaker (Mr. Cornwall) severely reprimanding a large body of members in a long speech, as "a set of gentlemen who spent most of their time elsewhere, and did not deem it necessary to attend to any part of the debate, in order that they might decide with decency, or vote with conviction."

In the month of April, when, on account of being so lately ejected from office and from public favour, an act of respect to him became additionally kind, the University of Glasgow elected Mr. Burke its Lord Rector, and re-elected him in the following November. His installation drew a large concourse of spectators, including all distinguished for rank or eminence in the surrounding country, anxious to see a man of whom they had

\* Believed to be Dr. Towers, then writing in the New Annual Register.

heard so much; several of the literati, among whom was Professor Dugald Stewart, accompanied him from Edinburgh. An elegant speech expressed his thanks for the honour done him, his regard for the learning and talent assembled within the walls in which they were, and his esteem for the national character, by which he confessed he had been favourably impressed. "They are a people," said he, in a conversation with Mr. Windham, "acute and proud, of infinite pretension, and no inconsiderable performance; and, notwithstanding their offensive egotism and nationality, which it seems a point of conscience to push down every body's throat, on the whole very estimable."

On another occasion, being asked his opinion of a Scotsman of some consideration who had been recently introduced to him: "A very good kind of man," was the reply, "only, like all the rest of them (alluding to their nationality) *he stinks of Scotticism.*" At another time he observed to Wilkes, "You never heard a Scotchman in your life converse for twenty minutes together, that he did not lug in Scotland by the head and shoulders, if there were no better means of introducing her. Every thing in their country is in their eyes of importance to all the rest of the world, though in itself trivial or inferior to what you find elsewhere; wretched hovels are transformed into the remains of feudal grandeur; rocks, heaths, and rugged mountains, into picturesque scenery; highland vagabonds, who lived by plundering their more peaceable neighbours, are gravely introduced to us as bold and warlike chieftains; sorry pamphleteers (provided only they be Scotch) are represented as men of talents; rural traditions, such as all countries produce, become Poems of Ossian; and when learning is in question, Edinburgh and Glasgow, in their opinions, quite extinguish the glories of Oxford and Cambridge, but these are excusable foibles." On a subsequent occasion (1785) he took a tour to the Highlands, and expressed much satisfaction from the journey; deriving, as he confessed, not only increase of pleasure, but of health, from the change of scene.

Shortly before this, he had lost, by death, his friend Sir George Saville, one of the most amiable men of his time, between whom and Mr. Burke a close intimacy commenced about the time of the entry of the latter into Parliament, and which continued without interruption until dissolved by that which dissolves all human connexions. Sir George was a man of the most upright intentions, warm heart, and of very considerable talents. To the latter it is no disparagement to say, that in their parliamentary exertion he was frequently believed to be obliged to Mr. Burke for suggesting, shaping, and revising some of the measures he introduced into the House; obligations indeed incurred in common with every other member of the party. To his virtues and merit Mr. Burke paid the following animated tribute in his speech

at Bristol in 1783, alluding to the act of 1778 for relieving the Roman Catholics.

“The mover of the bill was Sir George Saville. When an act of great and signal humanity was to be done, and done with all the weight and authority that belonged to it, the world could cast its eyes upon none but him. I hope that few things which have a tendency to bless or to adorn life, have wholly escaped my observation in my passage through it. I have sought the acquaintance of that gentleman, and have seen him in all situations. He is a true genius: with an understanding vigorous, and acute, and refined, and distinguishing even to excess; and illuminated with a most unbounded, peculiar, and original cast of imagination. With these he possesses many external and instrumental advantages; and he makes use of them all. His fortune is amongst the largest; a fortune which, wholly unincumbered as it is with one single charge from luxury, vanity, or excess, sinks under the benevolence of its dispenser.

“This private benevolence, expanding itself into patriotism, renders his whole being the estate of the public, in which he has not reserved a *peculium* for himself of profit, diversion, or relaxation. During the session, the first in, and the last out of the House of Commons; he passes from the senate to the camp; and seldom seeing the seat of his ancestors, he is always in the senate to serve his country, or in the field to defend it. But in all well-wrought compositions, some particulars stand out more eminently than the rest; and the things which will carry his name to posterity, are his two bills; I mean that for a limitation of the claims of the crown upon landed estates; and this for the relief of the Roman Catholics. By the former he has emancipated property; by the latter he has quieted conscience: and by both, he has taught that grand lesson to government and subject—no longer to regard each other as adverse parties.

“Such was the mover of the act that is complained of by men who are not quite so good as he is; an act most assuredly not brought in by him from any partiality to the sect which is the object of it. For, among his faults, I really cannot help reckoning a greater degree of prejudice against that people than becomes so wise a man. I know that he inclines to a sort of disgust, mixed with a considerable degree of asperity, to the system; and he has few, or rather no habits with any of its professors. What he has done was on quite other motives. The motives were these, which he declared in his excellent speech on his motion for the bill; namely, his extreme zeal to the Protestant religion, which he thought utterly disgraced by the act of 1699; and his rooted hatred to all kind of oppression, under any colour, or upon any pretence whatsoever.”

To this worthy man and upright senator a very handsome



statue is erected in York cathedral. He is represented leaning on a pillar, holding in his hand a scroll, on which is written, "The Petition of the Freeholders of the County of York;" meaning the petition for parliamentary reform, on which question, however, he and his eloquent friend wholly differed. On the front of the pedestal, which is six feet high, the height of the monument being altogether sixteen, is the following inscription, said to be written by Mr. Burke:—

To the Memory of  
SIR GEORGE SAVILLE, BART.

Who,

In five successive Parliaments,  
Represented the County of York ;  
The Public Love and Esteem of his  
Fellow-Citizens  
Have decreed this  
Monument.

His Life was an Ornament and Blessing  
To the Age in which he lived ;  
And, after his death, his

Memory

Will continue to be beneficial to mankind,  
By holding forth an example of  
Pure and unaffected Virtue,  
Most worthy of Imitation,  
To the latest Posterity.

He departed this life January the 9th,  
1784,

★In the 58th year of his Age,  
Beloved and lamented.

In private life he was Benevolent and  
Sincere ;

His Charities were extensive and secret ;  
His whole heart was formed on principles  
Of Generosity, Mildness, Justice, and universal Candour.

In public, the patron of every national  
Improvement ;

In the Senate, uncorrupt ;

In his commerce with the world disinterested.

By genius enlightened in the means of  
Doing good ;

He was unwearied in doing it.

In the autumn, his house at Beaconsfield was entered in the night, and robbed of a quantity of plate and other articles of value; in allusion to the conveyance which it appeared brought the thieves from London to effect it, and carried them and their booty back, he used familiarly to term it the *curricle* robbery. Not long afterwards he found time to draw up for a distant relation, Mr. E. P. Burke, the outline of a course of "Lectures on Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce," intended to be filled up and delivered by that gentleman at Merchant Taylor's Hall, Bristol; they are said to have borne the stamp of his characteristic genius, knowledge, and comprehensive acquaintance with commercial principles and history.

About the same time death withdrew from the world his old acquaintance Dr. Johnson, from whom, in the vicissitudes of 27 years, no estrangement occurred to interrupt their mutual admiration and regard. Visiting him in his last illness, with some other friends, Mr. Burke remarked, that the presence of strangers might be oppressive to him. "No, Sir," said the dying moralist, "it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state indeed, when *your* company would not be a delight to me." He followed him to the grave as a mourner; and in contemplating his character, applied to it a fine passage from Cicero, which might equally suit his own—*Intentum enim animum quasi arcum habebat, nec languescens succumbebat senectuti.*—When some one censured Johnson's general rudeness in society, he replied with equal consideration and truth, "It is well, when a man comes to die, if he has nothing worse to accuse himself of than some harshness in conversation." He often remarked that Johnson was greater in discourse than even in writing, and that Boswell's Life was the best record of his powers; in 1790, he became one of the committee formed to erect a statue to his memory.

Shortly before this he had lost by death another highly esteemed friend, to whom allusion has been already made, General Haviland; who residing at Penn, in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield, a close intimacy had commenced between the families, which, cemented by the subsequent union of the son of the General with the niece of Mr. Burke, continued with the utmost cordiality through life. The General, who had spent nearly all his days in the army, was a high spirited and most honourable old soldier, a companion of Wolfe in America, and who became personally known to, and highly esteemed by, his late Majesty, through some anecdotes told of his romantic generosity; one of which may be mentioned.

Having applied twice or thrice ineffectually for a commission for his own son, a vacancy at length occurred in his own regiment, the 45th, to which it was considered he had the right of nomination; the family congratulated him on the opportunity which thus presented of accomplishing his wishes without further trouble, when, to their surprise he said he had altered his determination;—the boy could not have it. "There is," said he, "young ——, who is more in want of it than he is; his father gave me a commission when he might otherwise have disposed of it, and being now dead, and his family unprovided for, it is but right I should repay to the son what I owe to the father.—My boy must wait;"—and the commission was given accordingly.

Mr. Burke used to say that he knew few men not professedly devoted to study, who possessed more ingenuity and information than the General. He had likewise a great genius for mechanics; could even repair, and it is said, make, watches; a pocket compass very correct and neatly executed by him, has been seen by the

writer; in short, nearly all the wood and iron work in his house was done by himself, having a forge and bellows for the purpose, and when this source of amusement was exhausted, he was accustomed to apply to the neighbouring cottagers for work. An antiquarian friend relates to the writer, that there were few pottage-pots, skillets, or saucepans in the vicinity of his house, which had not at one time or another furnished evidence of the General's skill;—and relates the following anecdote:—

“John Tilbury, now living, and at the age of 90 still vigorous enough to take a leading part in singing the psalms at Penn Church, and who at that time frequently joined the church choir with his bassoon, had the mishap to break some of the brass work of his instrument—and as a matter of course carried it to the General to repair. When finished, Tilbury drew out his canvas bag of money with a flourish, and put the question—“Well General, what am I in your debt for the job?” “My price,” replied the veteran with good humour, “is, should it be again broken, to let me have the pleasure of again repairing it.”

He had a great antipathy to an untruth, and rarely or never forgave any person who had once sinned in this respect towards him. Of this the young officers under his command were so well aware, as some of them now living say, that when they wished for leave of absence, and assigned some fictitious reason to him to obtain it, they continued in the greatest dread lest the real motive, which was commonly a pleasurable excursion, should be discovered.\*

\* The following notice of this veteran appeared in the newspapers at the period of his death, September, 1784, believed to be from the pen of Burke:

“Died at Penn, in Buckinghamshire, in the 67th year of his age, General William Haviland, Colonel of the 45th regiment. He was an officer distinguished for his long and able services, having spent his whole life in the army; for his father being an officer, he was born while the regiment was on duty in Ireland. He himself acted as Lieutenant under Lord Cathcart at the memorable siege of Carthage; and afterwards with Vernon at the conquest of Porto Bello. He then served as Aid-du-Camp under General Blakeney during the rebellion in Scotland. In the subsequent war, from the beginning of hostilities he served in America, where he had a separate command, and by his exertions and success received the particular acknowledgments of Lord Amherst, who has ever since honoured him with his friendship.

“A singular genius for mechanics enabled him to concert measures for passing the Rapids; and the fertility of his resources in other unusual circumstances, made him very efficient (under his distinguished commander) in contributing to the success of the English arms in America. In the same war he acted as second in command at the conquest of Martinique, and in a very high one at the Havannah; so that having had the good fortune through life to be placed in the most conspicuous scenes of action on chosen services, and with the most eminent men, he acted in such a manner as even among them to attain a high reputation for courage and ability.

“When the last war broke out he was put on the staff, and after being a very short time at Whitehaven, he was entrusted with the command of the western division of the island during the whole time the French invasion was expected, and there continued till the end of the war. The station was important and the service delicate; there he had the happiness to preserve perfect harmony between the regular forces and militia; while by the prudent disposition of his troops and an exact



Mrs. Salisbury Haviland, his lady, well known among many of the wits of the time for possessing an original and vigorous mind, was much admired by Mr. Burke, who when in town, frequently corresponded with her on the topics of the day. She had a taste for poetry, and wrote verses with ease and spirit. Her sisters, Mrs. Balfour and Miss Aston, who lived with her after the death of her husband, were likewise superior women; and the former, who possessed a lively disposition, is said to have given Garrick the first idea of the character of the *Irish Widow*, in his farce of that name, by a trick played off in a familiar party upon the simplicity of Goldsmith. This lady it seems, for a piece of amusement, personated such a character—just arrived from Ireland, full of brogue and blunders—with wit, rant, and impudence—a little gentility nevertheless—and, added to all, assuming to be an authoress, soliciting subscriptions for her poems. Some of these she read with an affected enthusiasm, which created the greatest amusement amongst those who were in the secret. Goldsmith—the great Goldsmith as she called him, her countryman and of course, friend, she flattered extravagantly, and repeatedly appealed to him on the merit of the pieces, which he praised with all due warmth in her presence—offered his subscription—and as strongly abused the verses, (as well perhaps he might) when she retired. This scene, it is said, offered a finished specimen of acting.

Among their other acquaintance was Dean Marlay, frequently mentioned by Boswell for his sprightly and sociable qualities, who having passed a very agreeable day in the society of these ladies, sent them the following jeu d'esprit:—

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO TWO CELEBRATED COQUETS.

*An Answer to Mrs. Haviland, who asked, or ought to have asked, "What is Coquetry?"*

*Haviland.*—What's Coquetry? *His Reverence.*—April weather,  
 Not the same two hours together;  
 Like a weather-cock still turning,  
 Now 'tis freezing, now 'tis burning;  
 Now 'tis tender, now 'tis rude,  
 Now 'tis formal like a prude;

discipline he performed the more substantial functions, he maintained the dignity of his situation by a style of life which became the service of his Sovereign.

"His house was open to the navy as well as to the army; and the force of personal character, which was cordial, plain, informed, and unaffected, did much to facilitate the national service in a country little inured to the burthen of arms, and when so many principal gentlemen were drawn away from their occupations and amusements. The same disposition followed him through life. To his own regiment he was a kind father, and to the younger officers of it his house was literally a home. The consequence however is, that in a long course of service, overlooking many opportunities of emolument, but none of benevolence, though he always maintained a just economy, he has left his family in very narrow circumstances; for the sole reward of his services was a marching regiment on the Irish establishment, which was bestowed upon him very late in life, and with a constitution harassed and broken, not less from the variety than from the length of his services."

Youthful, beautiful, and blooming,  
 Whilst submissive, still presuming;  
 Every winning art expert in,  
 Lovely, lively, and uncertain;  
 Flatt'ring promises still making,  
 Promises each moment breaking;  
 Sweetly trifling, gaily prating,  
 Love in every breast creating;  
 'Tis a dear bewitching sprite,  
 Made of beauty, wit, and spite;  
 Form'd to deceive and to subduc,  
 And look like——false Balfour and you.

During the summer, Mr. Burke received a visit from his old friend Mr. Shackleton and his daughter, an ingenious lady, already introduced to the reader under the name of Leadbeater, who, charmed with the situation of his park and its vicinity, wrote a short poem descriptive of the scenery, the mansion, and a faithful sketch of its owner, of which the following forms the introduction.

All hail, ye woods, in deepest gloom array'd!  
 Admit a stranger through your rev'rend shade,  
 With timid step to seek the fair retreat,  
 Where Virtue and where Genius fix their seat:  
 In vain retiring from the public gaze,  
 Not deepest shades can veil so bright a blaze.

Lo! there the mansion stands in princely pride;  
 The beauteous wings extend on either side;  
 Unsocial pomp flies from the cheerful gate,  
 Where hospitality delights to wait;  
 A brighter grace her candid smile bestows  
 Than the majestic pillars comely rows.  
 Enter these ever-open doors, and find  
 All that can strike the eye, or charm the mind:  
 Painting and sculpture there their pride display,  
 And splendid chambers deck'd in rich array.

But these are not the honours of the dome  
 Where Burke resides, and strangers find a home;  
 To whose glad hearth the social virtues move,  
 Paternal fondness and connubial love,  
 Benevolence unwearied, friendship true,  
 And wit unforced, and converse ever new,  
 And manners, where the polish'd court we trace,  
 Combined with artless nature's noble grace.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the sad voice of indigence he hears,  
 And pain and sickness, eloquent in tears—  
 Forsakes the festive board with pitying eyes,  
 Mingles the healing draught,\* and sickness flies;  
 Or, if the mind be torn with deep distress,  
 Seeks, with kind care, the grievance to redress.  
 This, this is Edmund Burke—and this his creed—  
 This is sublime and beautiful indeed.

\* There was in this (as indeed in every other part of the character) something more than mere poetical compliment of the fair authoress.

To this compliment he wrote the following letter in reply:—

“My dear Miss Shackleton,

“I ought not to have suffered myself to remain so long at a disadvantage in your mind. My fault is considerable, but not quite so great as it appears; for your letter went round by way of Carlisle, and it was a good while before it came to my hands. It ought, indeed, to have been my care to have made the earliest possible acknowledgment, where nothing more was required; and in a case where, indeed, there was little more in my power to do than to tell you in a few plain and sincere words, how extremely sensible I was of the honour you have done me, by making this family and this place the subject of some of the most beautiful and most original verses that have for many years been made upon any place or any persons.

“They make us all a little more fond of ourselves, and of our situation. For my own part I will not complain, that when you have drawn a beautiful landscape, you have put an old friend of your father’s as a figure in the foreground; nor shall I pretend that I am not pleased even with the excess of partiality, which has made him an object worthy of appearing in such a scene. The scene itself, fine as it is, owes much to the imagination and skill of the painter; but the figure owes all to it. You great artists never draw what is before you, but improve it up to the standard of perfection in your own minds. In this description, I know nothing of myself; but what is better, and may be of more use, I know what a good judge thinks I ought to be.

“As to your picture of this part of the country, I cannot help observing, that there is not the least of common-place in it. One cannot apply it equally to every country as most things of this kind may be turned. It is particular and appropriated; and that, without being minute or tedious in the detail. Indeed it is a sweet poem; and shows a mind full of observation, and retentive of images in the highest degree. Some of the lines are not quite so finished as to match the rest; and some time or other, I may take the liberty of pointing them out to you; and some of the rhymes hitch upon words, to which nothing (not even you) can give grace. But these are lesser blemishes and easily effaced either by omission or a trivial change. You will excuse this freedom. But in so fine a poem, in which your kindness for an old friend of your father has given me so great an interest, you will naturally expect that I should wish for the perfection which I know you can give *your* work with a little more of *your* care.

“Pray excuse this very late and very imperfect acknowledgment of the great favour you have done me. I cannot plead business in favour of my delay. I have had a great deal of leisure time. At the moment I write this, I never was more busy in my life; and, indeed, thus much is in favour of activity and occupation, that the more one has to do the more one is



capable of doing, even beyond our direct task. I am ever, with Mrs. Burke's, my brother's, and my son's most affectionate regards to you, and to all Ballitore, which we love with great sincerity, my dear Miss Shackleton,

“Your most faithful and most obliged

“And obedient humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“Beaconsfield, Dec. 13th, 1784.”

His benevolence, as the preceding poetic compliment implies, was frequently shown in administering medicine, of which he knew a little of the practical part, to his poorer neighbours in the country, when they were unable to pay for more regular advice, or too distant to procure it immediately; and also to his servants and family. On one of these occasions in mixing some medicines for Mrs. Burke, he used a wrong one by mistake, and when he found it was likely to be productive of serious consequences, experienced indescribable agony for a few hours until assured there was no farther danger. In allusion to this unpleasant occurrence, he sometimes afterwards used to say to Dr. Bröcklesby, “I mean to leave off practice, Doctor, for I fear I am little better than a quack.”

To beggars he was kind and charitable, showing more compassion to the itinerant class than is generally exhibited, and which his education in Ireland, where from there being no poor laws, more consideration is displayed to such objects than in this country, tended to strengthen. All the silver which he carried out, in going for a walk, was usually disposed of in this way before he came home, so that if a hackney-coach brought him to the door, he was scarcely ever able to discharge it without procuring the means from some one in the house. He would not admit that persons refused to assist travelling mendicants from policy, “No, Sir,” said he, in a conversation on the subject, “it is only an apology for saving their money.”

Some years after this time, when enfeebled by infirmity and by grief for the loss of his son, he was walking in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield, with two ladies, near relatives, a beggar-man rather advanced in years accosted them, requesting assistance. Mr. Burke, after a few questions, gave him a shilling. “I wonder, my dear Sir,” remarked one of the ladies, as they walked on, “you should bestow upon those people, who are generally worthless characters, so much; what you have just now given will be spent in *gin*.” “Madam,” replied he emphatically, after a pause, and assuming a severe aspect, “he is an old man;—and if *gin* be his comfort, let him have *gin*.”

## CHAPTER IX.

Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts.—Report of the Shipwreck of his son.—Impeachment of Mr. Hastings.—Peroration on opening the Charges.—Visit to Ireland by Mr. Burke.—Conversations with a Gentleman in London.—Letters to Lord Charlemont.—Mr. Hardy's account of him.—Preface to Bellendenus.—Epitaph on the Marquis of Rockingham.

In the Session commencing 25th January, 1785, no notice being taken of India affairs in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Burke moved an amendment, warmly supported by Mr. Fox, and observed in allusion to the Governor General, that "there was at this moment in India as great a phenomenon as ever the world had produced. A person who stood not as a delinquent, but as a criminal in the eyes of that House—whose criminal charge was on the records of their journals, and whose recall had been ordered by that House; nevertheless, in defiance of their authority, that criminal was at this moment commanding our armies, and directing the expenditure of our revenues in Bengal."

He likewise took part on the subject of the Westminster scrutiny, in which the Minister was accused of showing as much unworthy resentment towards Mr. Fox, as he had done in the preceding Session toward the Member for Malton; also on the question of the cotton tax; on that of the treatment of convicts under sentence of transportation; on the sinking fund; and, in addition to others of less moment, on the Irish commercial propositions.

On the latter question, though siding chiefly with Opposition, he did not take so active a part as was expected, a feeling of delicacy preventing him, as he said in reply to an allusion from Mr. Pitt, as to his being an Irishman, from balancing minutely and invidiously, conflicting claims between the country of his nativity, and that of his adoption, when the latter had raised him from nothing, to stations of high public trust and honour, with the power to legislate, not for any one class of persons, or for any one spot, however dear that spot might be to him, but for the general interests of the kingdom at large.

Mr. Pitt's motion for reform in the representation drew from Mr. Burke some pointed animadversions, demanding how *he*, of all men, could assume that the people were not sufficiently represented in that House, when he was daily in the habit of boasting that his own place and preponderance there, were solely owing to the voice of the people? On the bill of the Minister for regulating the public offices, which Mr. Sheridan termed a mere rat-catching measure, he was equally severe, and continuing the allusion, ludicrously quoted—

"Mice and rats, and such small deer,  
Had been Tom's food for seven long year."

Contrasting its biting and impracticable economy with the pro-

fusion countenanced in India, which would ultimately fall on the shoulders of England, he used the following extraordinary series of figures; new and forcible indeed, and conveying a striking impression to the mind, but objectionable from their number, and from following each other in such quick succession; passages of this kind, however, are rare in his works:—

“He (Mr. Pitt) was desirous to draw a resource out of the crumbs dropped from the trenchers of penury. He was rasping from the marrowless bones of skeleton establishments an empirical alimentary powder to diet into a similitude of health the languishing chimeras of fraudulent reformation. But while Parliament looked with anxiety at his desperate and laborious trifling, while they were apprehensive that he would break his back with stooping to pick up chaff and straws, he recovers himself at an elastic bound; and with a broadcast swing of his arm, he squandered over his Indian field a sum far greater than the amount of all these establishments added together.”

This *Indian field* now chiefly occupied Mr. Burke's thoughts, as he himself expressed it, “at all hours and seasons, in the retirements of summer, in the avocations of the winter, and even amid the snows (alluding to the ill reception he had experienced the preceding session) that had lately been showering on his head.” Besides the amendment to the Address, already noticed, he subsequently supported motions by other members on the same fruitful subject of India.

But his great effort, February 28th, was on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot, one of those remarkable outpourings of a most fertile and vigorous intellect, which on an unpromising theme, and under the disadvantage of rising last in the debate, seemed to combine all that could instruct, dazzle, and even overpower the hearer. It has been said to be in some parts florid. But in energy, in rhetorical address, in a minute knowledge of India and especially the intricacies of the question itself, in the boldness of his attacks upon those of the Company's servants who were considered by their intrigues to have laid the foundation of these debts, in the clearness of his narrative and detail, it was rated equal to any thing ever delivered in Parliament. The oppressions exercised upon the neighbouring state of Tanjore, by the Nabob and his agents, had already produced much animadversion, and Mr. Burke being well informed of the circumstances from private information, as well as public documents, characterized the chief agent and counsellor of his Highness on these occasions, Mr. Paul B——d, as “the old betrayer, insulter, oppressor, and scourge, of a country which has for years been an object of an unremitted, but unhappily an unequal struggle, between the bounties of Providence to renovate and the wickedness of mankind to destroy.”—Some of the spirit of the speech is said to have evaporated in the printed report.



Shortly after this period he suffered great agony of mind for some time, in consequence of a newspaper account of the loss, in a violent storm off the coast of Holland, of a Harwich packet, in which his son had embarked for the continent. Fortunately the report proved untrue; he arrived in safety, and after visiting Holland, Flanders, and some of the adjoining states, was received with some distinction in the Court and capital of France. During his father's tenure of power, he had been appointed Joint-receiver with Dr. King of the revenues of the Crown Lands, held for life; and after the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam had made him auditor of his accounts.

Some lines were addressed to him on occasion of the above afflicting rumour, by an old friend in Ireland, beginning—

*“ On a Report of Edmund Burke's Death, and of his Son having been lost at Sea.*

“ Safely secluded in the silent shade,  
Far from the clamour and the toils of state,  
No foreign cares our calm repose invade,  
One link alone connects us with the great.

“ For Burke we love, and with affection dear  
Our watchful eyes pursue his track of light;  
And, when he mov'd in pow'r's resplendent sphere,  
We bless'd the sphere where blaz'd an orb so bright.

“ But when, with virtuous scorn and just disdain,  
From these polluted scenes he nobly turn'd;  
Left to corruption and her venal train,  
We not for him but for our country mourn'd.

“ To him each dear domestic joy belongs,  
Joys more congenial to his gen'rous heart  
Than guilty wealth, amass'd by cruel wrongs,  
Than all that pow'r and splendour can impart.

“ Oh, tell it not :—recall the tidings sore,  
Which damp our fainting hearts with chilling breath,  
Rude as the blast which ravag'd Belgia's shore,  
Where the loud tempest rag'd the seeds of death.

“ What costly sacrifice dost thou require,  
Insatiate ocean? madly dost thou rave :—  
Must such a son—the son of such a sire—  
Must Burke's sole offspring glut thy greedy wave?

“ If o'er his head thy murd'rous surge be roll'd,  
While youth resists, and virtue pleads in vain,  
Restore that treasure—though the corse be cold—  
The mounting spirit thou could'st not detain.”

It was at the opening of the next session, January 24th, 1786, that Mr. Burke entered on one of the most tempestuous scenes of his life—nearly the whole of which was a political storm—in the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, late Governor General of India, who had recently arrived in England.

Much consideration is necessary adequately to appreciate the degree of moral courage requisite for this undertaking, nothing so arduous or laborious having ever fallen to the lot of a member of the English legislature; for though the work was in some measure divided, much the greater part unavoidably fell to his share. It demanded not only uncommon capacity of mind, but the most effective, and popular, and Parliamentary *working* talents; an utter disregard of difficulty; a vast fund of local knowledge; a perseverance in mental and bodily labour not to be conquered; a contempt for obloquy and reproach of every kind, such as few men had fortitude enough to encounter; an acquaintance with the powers, interests, habits, actual condition, intrigues, and even villanies of nearly all India, such as no man, and scarcely any body of men out of the country, could be expected to possess.

The accused, besides, was no inconsiderable man. He was supposed to possess the personal good opinion of the King.\* He had acquired the favour of the Board of Controul. He enjoyed the support of the India Company, which had profited by his sway. He had aggrandized the nation itself, which, satisfied with its acquisitions, felt little curiosity to inquire into the means employed to procure them; and in fact the subject, for two or three years before, would scarcely be listened to in Parliament. He had governed a vast empire for a series of years, and was of course enabled to profit by the weight, in all cases great, which authority bestows. He had not only amassed a competent fortune himself, but, what was of more consequence to his political interest, had enriched more men than any half dozen Prime Ministers of England put together. He had necessarily many friends and a vast number of apologists, several of whom were in Parliament, others in different situations of influence, who, from the oblique morality with which all India questions were treated, scarcely considered as improprieties there, what in England they would have stigmatized as unquestionable crimes. In addition to all these, the evidence had to come from a vast distance; qualified by some who thought the blame ought rather to fall on the agents than on the principal; by some who hesitated to condemn proceedings which had been the source of their own gain; by some who shrunk from the odium of coming forward, or being considered as public accusers; all which circumstances were observed to operate powerfully in the subsequent evidence given upon the trial of the Governor General.

Against all these considerations, against the opinion of some of his own party, and in some degree against his own personal interests, Mr. Burke obstinately persevered, winning the nation

\* During the trial a caricature was exhibited of Mr. Hastings trundling His Majesty in a wheelbarrow, with the label, "What a man buys he may sell." "Well," said the King good-humouredly on seeing it, "I have been represented in many extraordinary situations, but in a wheelbarrow is really something new."

over to his opinion before the end of the session, and what was of no less consequence, constraining the Minister, who displayed symptoms of hostility to the inquiry at first, to the subsequent observance of impartiality. If he eventually failed in convicting the accused on account of legal technicalities and impediments cast in his way, it is less matter for wonder, than that under so many obstacles, and in the teeth of so many powerful interests, he could carry the cause to a decision. But the sentence of the House of Lords was a matter of minor importance in his opinion, for the moment the impeachment was voted by the Commons, he felt, as he often said, that the great end for which he undertook it—public justice, was answered.

To those who knew little of his character, the motive for this gratuitous labour remained a puzzle, or was solved by the silly idea quite unworthy of notice, that it arose from a slight shown by the Governor General to Mr. William Burke. It is possible, indeed, remembering how the inquiry was approved and forwarded by Mr. Fox, that some latent feeling existed of indirectly justifying the India bill, by exposing more fully to general indignation the enormities which that measure was meant to correct. But the great and direct inducement, beyond all question, was a detestation of any thing like oppression or injustice inherent in the man; not simply as a moral principle, but an ingrafted feeling; ardent, and perhaps too unrestrained for the imposing station he occupied in the country, but which had been shown in all the chief actions of his life, public and private; in upholding against oppression the Commons of America at one time—and the King, Nobility, and Clergy of France, at another; in resenting the tyranny attempted to be exercised over him by Mr. Hamilton in the early part of his life, and what he considered the harshness, reproach, and injury shown him by Mr. Fox and others of the party towards its decline; “in whose breast,” as he subsequently said of himself, “no anger, durable or vehement, has ever been kindled but by what he considered as tyranny.” His philanthropy and integrity were constantly eulogized in the House of Commons by all the eminent men most opposed to him on public affairs, and never more so than during the whole progress of this prosecution.

It is necessary also to remember that it was no sudden burst of passion, no transient or immediate feeling of resentment, but adopted after much and serious deliberation. Since 1780, when, as a member of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, the conduct of Mr. Hastings had been attacked and investigated before him, he had constantly recommended his recall, and expressed an opinion that he deserved punishment. He had no other dislike to that gentleman, he said, than a conviction of his mis-government, persevered in against repeated remonstrances and orders; he knew nothing otherwise of him; he, and the rest



of the Committee, had begun with Sir Elijah Impey, and only picked up Mr. Hastings in their way. His attention being thus excited to a subject so important to the good of our Indian empire, there appeared ample matter for further inquiry, as almost every fresh arrival from the East added to the list of alleged oppressions or offences by the Governor General. Strong dissatisfaction, alternating with votes of approbation, had been expressed at his conduct previous to this, by the Court of Directors at home; but orders for recall were so intermingled with orders to remain, that to many, not in the secret, the proceedings at the India House became a riddle;—the main solution of which was, that the Directors thought many of his measures wrong, and desired his return; the Proprietors on the other hand, simply found them profitable, and therefore wished him to remain.

In 1776, the former voted his recall; while the latter body, as was then in their power, according to the charter, at a General Court, rescinded the order. Shortly afterward, Mr. Grant and Mr. Maclean, a former friend of Mr. Burke and now the confidential agent of Mr. Hastings, arrived and tendered the resignation of the latter, which was accepted; but the Governor General, finding himself taken at his word, denied having given that gentleman any such authority, and resolutely kept his station; and as Mr. Maclean perished at sea on his return to India, this extraordinary misunderstanding was never explained to the world. In 1779, 1780, 1781, in settling the government, he was continued. In 1782, Mr. Dundas, as Chairman of the Secret Committee, moved and carried a string of the severest resolutions against him, and among others his recall, which was ordered accordingly; but the Proprietors, having still by the constitution of the Company, the power so to do, again negatived the order. At length, in February, 1785, he quitted Bengal of his own accord, just as Lord Macartney had been appointed to it from Madras, but whose assumption of the supreme authority it was declared Mr. Hastings and his party had determined to resist even by force, had that nobleman reached Calcutta before he embarked.

On reaching England, the Directors passed a vote of thanks for his long and meritorious services, though for years they had complained that his proceedings were most objectionable, that he despised their authority, and never paid the slightest regard to their orders when they happened to be at variance with his own opinion. And Mr. Dundas had already declared that “Mr. Hastings rarely quitted Calcutta that his track was not followed by the deposition of some prince, the desertion of some ally, or the depopulation of some country.”

All these circumstances, in addition to the specific offences laid to his charge, tended to confirm Mr. Burke in his purpose, and to lead him to believe that his motives at any rate for inquiring into the conduct of such an imperious and refractory servant could not

be questioned. Alluding to these during the preliminary proceedings he observed :

“ Least of all could it be said, with any colour of truth, that he was actuated by passion. Anger, indeed, he had felt, but surely not a blameable anger ; for who ever heard of an inquiring anger, a digesting anger, a collating anger, an examining anger, or a selecting anger ? The anger he had felt was an uniform, steady, public principle, without any intermixture of private animosity ; that anger, which five years ago warmed his breast, he felt precisely the same, and unimpaired, at that moment.”

“ Let who will shrink back,” said he, touching on the same theme, in 1785, “ I shall be found at my post. Baffled, discountenanced, subdued, discredited, as the cause of justice and humanity is, it will be only the dearer to me. Whoever, therefore, shall at any time bring before you any thing toward the relief of our distressed fellow-citizens in India, and towards the subversion of the present most corrupt and oppressive system for its government, in me shall find a weak, I am afraid, but a steady, earnest, and faithful assistant.”

Ten years afterward, when the trial had been disposed of, he again alluded to his motives.

“ Were I to call for a reward (which I have never done), it should be for those (services) in which for fourteen years, without intermission, I have showed the most industry, and had the least success ; I mean in the affairs of India. They are those on which I value myself the most ; most for the importance ; most for the labour ; most for the judgment ; most for constancy and perseverance in the pursuit. *Others may value them most for the intention. In that surely they are not mistaken.*”

The belief in Mr. Hastings’s guilt was very general in India as well as in England, by those who had the nearest views of what was going on. Among these, in addition to many others, was the late Mr. Charles Grant, whose knowledge of India, whose integrity and abilities were equally unquestioned, and to whom for his eminent services a statue has just been voted by the company. To the last moment of his life this gentleman stedfastly persevered on all occasions in the strongest censure of the obnoxious Governor General, and as firmly resisted every proposition that could be considered complimentary to his memory.

From authority which the writer cannot question, he is likewise informed, that a great statesman of the present day, formerly high in authority in India, and from his knowledge acquired in that station the best possible judge of the matter, entertains no doubt whatever of the guilt of Mr. Hastings, particularly on the first three charges, and that he ought to have been convicted.

In addition to this, it is well known that Mr. Dundas under Lord North’s administration, was the first accuser of Mr. Hastings, procured the vote for his recall, and threatened him with

punishment. Mr. Francis also, in the debate in 1788 on the propriety of making him a manager of the impeachment, boasted, that "he supplied the information, furnished the materials, and *prompted the prosecution*, and therefore he would not stand aloof if the house thought proper to employ him in that capacity." It is, therefore extremely unjust to consider Mr. Burke, as is frequently done through ignorance or malice, either as the original accuser, or as the *only* instigator of a prosecution which unquestionably arose from the very purest motives.

The obloquy cast upon him during the trial, in books, pamphlets, and newspapers, in verse and in prose, in private and in many public discussions, not excepting even the courts of law, was nearly as great as that thrown on the Governor General. A stranger, from reading the publications of the day, would have been at a loss to tell which was the accused, and which the accuser. His language on all occasions, the arrangements during the proceedings, the smallest inadvertency committed by the other managers, and particularly the length of the trial, which arose more from the nature of the House of Lords as a Court of Judicature, and the mode of defence, than from the managers, proved fruitful themes of abuse directed against Mr. Burke alone; to forward which, money to the amount of £20,000 was liberally distributed for that purpose to the press. An imprudent dispute between the agent of the prisoner, Major Scott, and a printer of a newspaper, disclosed a bill which excited some amusement when made public, the items regularly marked and charged running thus—"Letters against Mr. Burke," "Strictures upon the Conduct of Mr. Burke," "Attacking Mr. Burke's veracity," the latter being charged at five shillings—a small sum he jocularly remarked, for such a purpose—and others of similar import. In addition to these, squibs without number issued from various quarters, one of which, Simkin's letters, though not the best of their class, formed a tolerably fair and amusing satire on the conduct and speeches of the chief managers, without more malignity towards Mr. Burke than such things prescriptively claim; the opening alludes to one of his peculiarities:—

With respect to processions, and taking of places,  
By Masters and Judges, and Lordships and Graces;  
According to promise, I now shall describe  
The procession of Burke, and his eloquent tribe.

First Edmund walks in at the head of the group,  
That powerful chief of that powerful troop;  
What awful solemnity's seen in his gait,  
While the nod of his head beats the time to his feet.

An epigram, said to be written by the late Lord Ellenborough, then one of the prisoner's counsel, and the idea of which, though not acknowledged, is borrowed from Mr. Burke himself in a passage in the letter to Lord Kenmare, was delivered to him in a letter just before opening one of the charges, in



order that the sting might discompose him in the performance of this duty, but he calmly conveyed it to his pocket without further notice. It is remarkable that the reputed author of this, after being repeatedly reprimanded on the trial for his violence of language, lived to exhibit on the judgment-seat, where above all other places it is least excusable, the same violence and the same irritability which he had censured in Mr. Burke, for whom as an accuser at the bar, there was some apology; in addition to a proud and domineering spirit and conduct, which Mr. Burke never displayed in any station.

A conviction of the guilt of the Governor General remained in his accuser's mind to the last hour of his life, and was expressed to his friends whenever the subject was mentioned; to others not so intimate he was nearly as unreserved: writing to Mr. Moser, April 5, 1796, he says:

"I am rather surprised at your speaking of such a man as Hastings with any degree of respect; at present I say nothing of those who chose to take his guilt upon themselves. I do not say I am not deeply concerned; God forbid that I should speak any other language. Others may be content to prevaricate in judgment: it is not my taste; but they who attack me for my fourteen years' labours on this subject, ought not to forget that I always acted under public authority, and not of my own fancy; and that in condemning me they asperse the whole House of Commons for their conduct, continued for the greater part of three Parliaments."

During the progress of the investigation, Mr. Pitt repeatedly said, that it was conducted by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke) with every degree of fairness, openness, and candour, of which it was susceptible. "The affairs of India," said Mr. Fox, "had long been hid in a darkness as hostile to inquiry as it was friendly to guilt; but by the exertions of ONE MAN, these clouds had been dissipated. His ardent virtue, his sublime genius, and that glowing enthusiasm so essential to both, had, with the application of years, left them nothing of information at present to desire." He frequently stated that no man but his right honourable friend could have accomplished the more than Herculean task of the investigation itself, or surmounted the incessant and vexatious difficulties at every step thrown in his way. These, during the trial before the House of Lords, were of an extraordinary nature, scarcely a point of evidence being admitted against the prisoner without quibble and cavil, discussion and adjournment, and ultimately from the forms of law, a decision in his favour. No reader, perhaps, but a lawyer, will be satisfied with the course of the trial. Few conscientious men will be pleased with the result of it, or the means uniformly resorted to, to evade inquiry into the merits of the transactions themselves, which, in the eye of morality, will leave Mr. Hastings,

if not a guilty man, at least a suspected one; for in the general opinion, as well as in that of an acute historian, if his accusers did not prove his guilt, he himself did not prove his innocence.\*

On the question of delay in the trial, urged pretty frequently in 1790, Mr. Burke alleged that, though nominally of three years' duration, it was in reality only sixty-four days, at four hours each day; that the managers could not possibly be responsible for the delays, prorogations, and adjournments of the House of Lords with which they had nothing whatever to do; that even sixty-four days was not an unprecedented thing in their own House, for an Election Committee had continued ninety days, and that as the number of the charges, and the magnitude of the offences were greater than had ever been laid to the charge of any one impeached by that House, so no fair comparison could be drawn between the periods required for trial.

Mr. Pitt repeatedly declared, that, looking to the magnitude and difficulty of the undertaking, he did not think there was any ground for the charge of delay; but if any unnecessary delay existed, assuredly it rested not with the managers. Many attributed it to the artifices of the defendant or his lawyers. Mr. Dundas pointedly said, "there seemed no little art used in the clamour about delay, for it was always raised toward the end of a session, but never at the beginning of it, when steps might possibly be taken to provide a remedy. No share of the blame rested with that House, or with the managers. *If there were any delay in the trial, it lay, he cared not who heard him, or where his declaration might be repeated, at the door of the House of Lords.*" It appears by computation, that had the House sat as an ordinary Court of Judicature ten hours a day, the trial would have been finished in two months.

Another charge urged against Mr. Burke was, the intemperance and asperity of his language toward the prisoner. To this it has been replied, with great truth, that no prosecutor's temper was ever before so tried by difficulties of every kind, by objections, by cavils, by libels without number out of doors; by taunts, by irritating language, and indirect abuse, within; and towards the close of the trial, by the obvious distaste toward the prosecution itself, displayed by some of the Court whom he addressed. One remarkable instance of this excited general notice. On the 25th of May, 1793, when he was cross-examining Mr. Auriol, and pushing him closely and at some length on account of the obvious distaste of the witness to be as explicit as was desired, the Archbishop of York who had already evinced strong symptoms of impatience, and whose son had been in high and profitable employments in India under Mr. Hastings, started up and said, that "he examined the witness

\* Mill's History of British India, vol. v.

as if he were examining not a gentleman but a pickpocket; that the illiberality and the inhumanity of the managers in the course of the long trial could not be exceeded by Marat and Robespierre, had the conduct of the trial been committed to them." Mr. Burke, with great dignity, and his accustomed presence of mind, replied, "I have not in my public capacity heard one word of what has been spoken, and I shall act as if I had not." The words, however, being published in a newspaper, excited severe comments in the House of Commons, though a motion for further proceedings against the printer was lost.

"Upon reading the printed minutes of the evidence with due care," says an historian, with whom, however, from political causes, Mr. Burke does not stand so well as he otherwise might—"I perceive that Mr. Burke treated the witness as an unwilling witness, which he evidently was: as a witness who, though incapable of perjury, was yet desirous of keeping back whatever was unfavourable to Mr. Hastings, and from whom information unfavourable to Mr. Hastings, if he possessed it, must be extorted by that coercion which it is the nature and to the very purpose of cross-examination to apply. Of the tones employed by Mr. Burke, the mere reader of the minute cannot judge; but of the questions there set down, there is not one which approaches to indecorum, or makes one undue insinuation. It was the Right Reverend Prelate, therefore, who betrayed an intemperance of mind, which as ill accorded with the justice of the case, as with the decencies of either his judicial or sacerdotal character."\*

The same writer gives some general and just reasons for the odium beginning to be cast upon the managers towards the conclusion of the trial. "The favour with which the cause of Mr. Hastings was known to be viewed in the highest family in the kingdom, could not be without a powerful effect on a powerful class. The frequency with which decisions and speeches, favourable to him, were made in the House of Lords; the defence which he received from the great body of the lawyers; the conversation of a multitude of gentlemen from India, who mixed with every part of society; the uncommon industry and skill with which a great number of persons, who openly professed themselves the friends or agents of Mr. Hastings, worked, through the press, and other channels, upon the public mind; and not least, the disfavour which is borne to the exposure of the offences of men in high situations in the bosom of that powerful class of society which furnishes the men by whom these situations are commonly filled; all these circumstances, united to others which are less known, succeeded at last in making it a kind of fashion to take part with Mr. Hastings, and to rail against his accusers." †

\* Mill's History of British India.

† Ibid. vol. v., pp. 181, 182.



The facts of the trial, which immediately relate to the chief manager, are speedily told. On the 16th of June, 1785, Mr. Hastings arrived in England; and on the 20th, Mr. Burke gave notice of an inquiry into his conduct next session. The very day of the meeting of Parliament, Major Scott, trusting, it appeared, to a belief that the minister would negative the motion for inquiry, called upon Mr. Burke to proceed; and received the reply of the Duke of Parma to Henry IV. of France, when challenged to bring his forces into the field and instantly decide their disputes—that he knew very well what to do, and had not come so far to be directed by an enemy. Mr. Fox declared that if his Right Hon. friend did not bring it forward, other members should supply his place; a sufficient indication that it was a general, not as was said, an individual measure.

In February and March, Mr. Burke moved for various papers, and declared his intention to proceed by impeachment at the bar of the House of Lords. In April the charges were delivered in; June the 1st, he opened the first charge,—that of driving the Rohillas from their country—which, though formerly reprobated by the House as an iniquitous proceeding, was now held not to afford matter for crimination. To the second, brought forward by Mr. Fox, that of the tyranny exercised over the Rajah of Benares, Mr. Pitt assented, when the friends of the Governor General turning round upon the Minister, accused him loudly of treachery, asserting they had been led by hints and promises to expect a different result.

The remaining charges were gone through in the succeeding session, commencing 25th January, 1787, and approved in general by the Minister, Mr. Sheridan opening with the celebrated speech on the Begum charge. A committee of impeachment was then formed; on the 25th of April, the articles were delivered in by the chairman, Mr. Burke, and on the 9th of May considered; when Mr. Pitt, in the very strongest language he could use, voted heartily and conscientiously, he said, for the impeachment. Next day, Mr. Burke accused the prisoner at the bar of the House of Lords, in the name of the Commons of England.

After a few preliminary proceedings, in the session of 1787—1788, in which Mr. Burke complained of being wholly crippled by the rejection of Mr. Francis as a Member of the committee, Westminster-Hall was opened in form, the thirteenth of February, when he led the procession thither, being as well as the other managers in full dress, followed by the House of Commons, Clerks of Parliament, Masters in Chancery, the Serjeants at law, Judges, House of Peers, and Royal Family, the prince of Wales coming last.

Two days were occupied in preliminary matters; on the 15th, before eight o'clock in the morning, though the proceedings did not commence before twelve, the Hall was crowded to excess,

164 Peers being also present, anxious to hear the opening speech, of which the historian of the trial gives the following account.

“Mr. Burke immediately rose and made his obedience to the Court; every eye was at this moment rivetted upon him. ‘He stood forth, he said, at the command of the Commons of Great Britain, as the accuser of Warren Hastings.’ Mr. Burke then stopped for above a minute, at the end of which he resumed, and continued his speech for two hours and a half. It was grave and temperate, yet pathetic and affecting. Every expression and sentiment was appropriate; and though, in the progress of it, he led the ignorant to the most familiar acquaintance with the origin of the crimes and the evils of India, he astonished the most knowing with the new aspect he gave to the whole, after it had been so long agitated and thoroughly discussed: First having apostrophized the tribunal before which he stood—congratulated his country on possessing so powerful an instrument of justice, and so authoritative a corrector of abuse—and hoped that no corruptions would ever taint, and no societies of special pleading and of Old Bailey prevarication be able to undermine it.”

The speech of the 16th, when the number of Peers present was increased to 175, occupied about three hours and a half, in which he severely commented upon the “geographical morality” as he happily termed it, of Mr. Hastings: a set of principles suited only to a particular climate, so that what was peculation and tyranny in Europe, lost both its name and its essence in India.

A fine burst of indignant eloquence occurred when alluding to the unlimited authority assumed by the Governor General. “But Mr. Hastings had pleaded the local customs of Hindostan as requiring the coercion of arbitrary power. *He* indeed to claim arbitrary power! From whom could he derive, or by what audacity could he claim such a power? He could not have derived it from the East India Company, for they had none to confer. He could not have received it from his Sovereign, for the Sovereign had it not to bestow. It could not have been given by either House of Parliament—for it was unknown to the British Constitution!” After alluding to the laws of India as well as of England, and instancing the Koran—the Institutes of Timur—the Gentoo Code—all opposed to every idea of tyrannical usurpation as strong and steadfast as our own statutes at large—he proceeded. “Talk to me any where of power, and I’ll tell you of protection! Mention a magistrate, and the idea follows of property! Show me any government, and you are to see the proposed interest of the governed! Power constituted otherwise is a monster—it is impossible!—in every system where there is any notion of the justice of God or the good of mankind.

“To act or think otherwise is blasphemy to religion, no less



than confusion in social order ! For 'Every good and perfect gift is of God'—and what good gift of God to man can be more perfect than the innate idea of justice and mercy—the law written in our hearts—the *primum vivens*, the *ultimum moriens*, of every being that has the boast of reason !"

The 18th was chiefly occupied in detailing the characters and horrible cruelties of some of the native agents of Government while grossly abusing their authority in the provinces. The 19th concluded this oration, or series of orations, occupying about three hours each day ; and so great was the effect of the whole upon his auditory, that it was only after a considerable lapse of time and repeated efforts, that Mr. Fox who had next to address the court, could obtain a hearing.

From the illness of the King and the absence of the Judges, the proceedings did not commence till the 20th of April, 1789 ; and next day, he began another powerful oration on the sixth charge of bribery and corruption. Each party soon accused the other of a wish to delay the proceedings, but the managers to obviate the charge on their part, voluntarily determined to confine themselves to the more serious heads of delinquency, omitting the others for the sake of expedition. The re-assembling of the new Parliament, in 1790, produced animated discussions in both Houses whether the impeachment had not abated by the dissolution of the old ; which after much discussion was decided in the negative against the opinion of the law authorities. Public anxiety on the trial had, however, abated, for the forms of the Court, and the complicated nature of the investigation, presented invincible obstacles to that quick progress, which is always necessary to keep alive popular interest on such occasions ; and it continued without any other event of consequence than the severe speeches of the chief manager, often excited, however, by the annoyances he received, till April 23rd, 1795, when a verdict of acquittal passed ; the Lord Chancellor voting with the Minority who thought him guilty. The duty of the managers indeed, had terminated in June preceding, by summing up on the different charges, Mr. Burke being the last ; and his concluding oration, which commenced on the 28th of May, continued for nine days. The thanks of the House, moved by Mr. Pitt, and seconded by Mr. Dundas, were immediately voted to the managers.

Mr. Hastings, like every one else under similar circumstances, is fully entitled to the benefit of the verdict recorded in his favour ; but when not content with this, he or his friends even to a recent period, continued to impugn the motives of the prosecutors, less reserve is necessary in adverting to his general character as an Indian ruler.

He was a man of considerable powers of mind—bold, assuming, and energetic ; but possessed of that species of energy which, in pushing its own views or interests, seldom stopped to consider the



rights, or condition, or feelings, of others who stood in his way. He forgot that Princes in India, like those elsewhere, were entitled to some degree of consideration and delicacy from the station they occupied in society, and especially in their own country; that good faith, justice, and sincerity, are in some degree necessary even in dealing with persons of an opposite character; that moderation in the exercise of authority is commonly the wisest policy; that an arbitrary spirit, assumed by the principal in government, is sure to become tyranny in the subordinate agents. From long familiarity with the country, his mind had become perverted to the belief that he was at perfect liberty to adopt the practices of the Asiatics, however unprincipled, in matters of government; forgetting that such conduct compromised the English credit and character, and might possibly by persevering in it shake our future hold upon this "Empire of opinion."

Many of his measures were undoubtedly brilliant, many very questionable, not a few at variance with all English ideas of justice, or even expediency; an opinion in which some of the latest and best writers on India occur.\* He had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of an Asiatic monarch, that he seemed to think the mere expression of his commands or wishes formed evidence enough of their utility and propriety; and that among Hindoos, whenever the slightest necessity pressed him on a point of policy, the end to be answered justified the means; a species of *geographical morality*, as Mr. Burke emphatically termed it, which he handled in the severest terms. Just in the same spirit, and on many of the same pleas, did Buonaparte put his foot on the necks of the prostrate Kings and nations of Europe; and in the page of history, the verdict which condemns the one cannot possibly acquit the other.

To try the Governor General therefore was a matter of positive duty, in order to clear the character of the nation. To acquit him was, perhaps, a measure of necessity due to the quibbles of law of which he invariably took advantage in every stage of the trial, to the ill-defined nature of his power, to the acknowledged difficulties by which he was sometimes beset, and to the spirit of some of his instructions; which, to gratify the cupidity of the Proprietors of India stock in Europe, seemed to embody the pith of the thrifty father's advice to his son—"make money, my son; honestly if possible, but at all events make money;"—and he succeeded in pouring into their coffers a sum of nine millions, by means which no glossing or apology, however specious, can make pure.

The length of the trial, indeed, formed no inconsiderable punishment of itself. But the investigation did much good by evincing that, though the Legislature had long slumbered over

\* Mill's History of India.—Malcolm's Political History of India; *passim*.

the acts of the India administration, impunity from that quarter was no longer to be expected. Its remissness hitherto had been one great cause for the continuance of abuse; and it is certain, that had the conduct of Lord Clive, or of those who deposed and imprisoned Lord Pigott, or of Sir Thomas Rumbold and others whom Mr. Dundas accused, been subjected to a similar ordeal, Mr. Hastings would not have attempted, or at least not have continued, his more objectionable proceedings, in the face of certain inquiry, and probable punishment.

Memorable as the trial is for the space it will occupy in history and the excitement it produced in the nation, it is still more remarkable for the displays, or rather feats of genius in its conductors, which are unparalleled in this or in any other country; "shaking the walls that surrounded them," in the words of Mr. Erskine, "with anathemas of super-human eloquence." It was in fact an æra in this art, a theme for the emulative oratory of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Windham, and others, names that ennoble any page on which they are inscribed, who seemed pitted for victory as much over each other as over the accused.

But above them all, beyond dispute, stood Mr. Burke. He had devoted more attention to the subject, and in some degree staked his reputation, that there were urgent grounds at least for inquiry; he was master of it at a time when few others knew or cared much about the matter; he had more at stake in the result, in consequence of its being represented, however untruly, as *his* prosecution; the reproach and misrepresentation to which it gave rise, served not to damp, but rather to increase and sharpen the energy of his mind, while the occasion was peculiarly suited to exhibit the vast extent of his knowledge, and the unrivalled variety of his powers. All these considerations, bearing powerfully on the point thus coming to issue, produced exertions without precedent or example; so extraordinary indeed, that, upon a low calculation, the whole of his speeches and writings connected with it, which at present occupy *seven* octavo volumes, would fill at the least *five* others if fully collected; and to give an intelligible outline of each speech or paper, would of itself make no inconsiderable book. The principal, however, are to be found in his Works already published, or in the concluding volumes which are soon to appear.

The greatest amazement, even to those who knew him best, was excited by the opening speech or speeches of the impeachment, which a modern writer, adverse to the impeachment itself, thus characterizes in the general terms employed at the time:

"Never were the powers of that wonderful man displayed to such advantage as on this occasion; and he astonished even those who were most intimately acquainted with him by the vast extent of his reading, the variety of his resources, the minuteness of his information, and the lucid order in which he arranged the whole

for the support of his object, and to make a deep impression on the minds of his hearers."

Nothing certainly in the way of fact, and nothing, perhaps, even in theatrical representation, ever exceeded the effects produced among the auditory, by the detail of the cruelties of Debi Sing, which he gave on the third day, from the reports of Mr. Paterson, who had been sent as commissioner to inquire into the circumstances. The whole statement\* is appalling and heart-sickening in the extreme; a convulsive sensation of horror, affright, and smothered execration, pervaded all of the male part of his hearers, and audible sobbings and screams, attended with tears and faintings, the female. His own feelings were scarcely less overpowering; he dropped his head upon his hands, and for some minutes was unable to proceed; he recovered sufficiently to go on a little further, but, being obliged to cease from speaking twice at short intervals, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, to relieve him, at length moved the adjournment of the House. Alluding to the close of this day, the writer of the History of the Trial, says—"In this part of his speech Mr. Burke's descriptions were more vivid, more harrowing, and more horrific, than human utterance on either fact or fancy, perhaps, ever formed before. The agitation of most people was very apparent—Mrs. Sheridan was so overpowered that she fainted: several others were as powerfully affected." Mrs. Siddons is said to have been one of the number.

"His powers," says a political adversary,† "were never more conspicuous than on that memorable day, on which he exposed the enormities of a subaltern agent of oriental despotism—the tortures inflicted by his orders, the flagrant injustice committed by his authority, the pollution that ensued in consequence of his sanction—when he painted agonizing Nature, vibrating in horrid suspense between life and destruction—when he described, in the climax of crimes, 'death introduced into the very sources of life,' the bosoms of his auditors became convulsed with passion, and those of more delicate organs, or weaker frame, actually swooned away. Nay, after the storm of eloquence had spent its force, and

\* See Burke's Works, vol. xiii. p. 320—327; but the whole history of the monster Debi Sing, from p. 296 of the same volume, is a matter of deep interest. Mr. Hastings in reply urged that he neither knew of nor countenanced his crimes; this probably was true; but the man's character was known to him before he was appointed to the situation, having been previously dismissed for gross mal-administration. What was more extraordinary and suspicious, though a rebellion had been produced by the cruelties of this man. Mr. Paterson's Official Reports were treated as libels upon him, and the commissioner, strange to say, returned to those who sent him upon the inquiry as the accused, not the accuser, Debi Sing having contrived to turn the tables upon him.—Mr. Hastings's administration abounded in such anomalies, and in the most unaccountable inconsistencies and contradictions, which, by the minutes in council, he seemed to take a kind of pride in displaying and recording.—Mr. Burke said that 40,000*l.* was the bribe paid for Debi Sing's appointment.

† Dr. Glennie.



his voice for the moment ceased, his features still expressed the energy of his feelings, his hand seemed to threaten punishment, and his brow to meditate vengeance."

The testimony of the accused party himself is, perhaps, the strongest ever borne to the powers of any speaker of any country. "For half an hour," said Mr. Hastings, "I looked up at the orator in a reverie of wonder; and during that space I actually felt myself the most culpable man on earth;" adding, however, "But I recurred to my own bosom, and there found a consciousness that consoled me under all I heard and all I suffered."

Even the flinty temperament of the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, was affected almost to producing, what Burke applied to him on another occasion, *iron tears down Pluto's cheek*; and, judging by his expressions at the time, his faith in Mr. Hastings's purity seemed staggered. Addressing the Peers some days afterwards, he concluded a handsome eulogium on the speech, by observing, "that their Lordships all knew the effect upon the auditors, many of whom had not to that moment, and, perhaps, never would, recover from the shock it had occasioned."

The peroration, though it wants the last polish of the powerful pen of the author, has been frequently mentioned as one of the most impressive in the records of judicial oratory. After advert- ing to various alleged offences of the accused, he proceeds—

"In the name of the Commons of England, I charge all this villany upon Warren Hastings, in this last moment of my application to you.

"My Lords, what is it that we want here to complete a great act of national justice? Do we want a cause, my Lords? You have the cause of oppressed princes, of undone women of the first rank, of desolated provinces, and of wasted kingdoms.

"Do you want a criminal, my Lords? When was there so much iniquity ever laid to the charge of any one?—No, my Lords, you must not look to punish any other such delinquent from India.—Warren Hastings has not left substance enough in India to nourish such another delinquent.

"My Lords, is it a prosecutor you want? You have before you the Commons of Great Britain as prosecutors; and, I believe, my Lords, that the sun, in its beneficent progress round the world, does not behold a more glorious sight than that of men, separated from a remote people by the material bounds and barriers of nature, united by the bond of a social and moral community;—all the Commons of England resenting, as their own, the indignities and cruelties that are offered to all the people of India.

"Do we want a tribunal? My Lords, no example of anti- quity—nothing in the modern world—nothing in the range of hu- man imagination, can supply us with a tribunal like this. My Lords, here we see virtually in the mind's eye that sacred majesty of the crown, under whose authority you sit, and whose power

you exercise. We see in that invisible authority, what we all feel in reality and life, the beneficent powers and protecting justice of His Majesty. We have here the Heir Apparent to the crown, such as the fond wishes of the people of England wish an Heir Apparent of the crown to be. We have here all the branches of the Royal Family in a situation between majesty and subjection, between the sovereign and the subject—offering a pledge in that situation for the support of the rights of the crown and the liberties of the people, both which extremities they touch.

“ My Lords, we have a great hereditary Peerage here ; those who have their own honour, the honour of their ancestors, and of their posterity, to guard ; and who will justify, as they have always justified, that provision in the Constitution, by which justice is made an hereditary office.

“ My Lords, we have here a new nobility, who have risen and exalted themselves by various merits, by great military services, which have extended the fame of this country from the rising to the setting sun : we have those, who by various civil merits and various civil talents, have been exalted to a situation which they well deserve, and in which they will justify the favour of their sovereign, and the good opinion of their fellow-subjects, and make them rejoice to see those virtuous characters, that were the other day upon a level with them, now exalted above them in rank, but feeling with them in sympathy, what they felt in common with them before.

“ We have persons exalted from the practice of the law, from the place in which they administered high, though subordinate justice, to a seat here, to enlighten with their knowledge, and to strengthen with their votes, those principles which have distinguished the courts in which they have presided.

“ My Lords, you have here also the lights of our religion ; you have the Bishops of England. My Lords, you have that true image of the primitive church in its ancient form, in its ancient ordinances, purified from the superstitions and the vices which a long succession of ages will bring upon the best institutions. You have the representatives of that religion which says, that their God is love, that the very vital spirit of their institution is charity ; a religion which so much hates oppression, that, when the God whom we adore appeared in human form, he did not appear in a form of greatness and majesty, but in sympathy with the lowest of the people,—and thereby made it a firm and ruling principle, that their welfare was the object of all government ; since the person, who was the Master of Nature, chose to appear himself in a subordinate situation. These are the considerations which influence them, which animate them, and will animate them, against all oppression ; knowing, that He, who is called first among them, and first among us all, both of the flock that is fed, and of those who feed it, made Himself ‘ the servant of all.’

“ My Lords, these are the securities which we have in all the constituent parts of the body of this House. We know them, we reckon, we rest upon them, and commit safely the interests of India and of humanity into your hands. Therefore, it is with confidence, that, ordered by the Commons,

“ I impeach Warren Hastings, Esquire, of high crimes and misdemeanors.

“ I impeach him in the name of the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, whose parliamentary trust he has betrayed.

“ I impeach him in the name of all the Commons of Great Britain, whose national character he has dishonoured.

“ I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has subverted; whose properties he has destroyed, whose country he has laid waste and desolate.

“ I impeach him in the name, and by virtue of those eternal laws of justice, which he has violated.

“ I impeach him in the name of human nature itself, which he has cruelly outraged, injured, and oppressed, in both sexes, in every age, rank, situation, and condition of life.

“ And I conjure this high and sacred Court to let not these pleadings be heard in vain !”

Of the physical as well as mental exertions of Mr. Burke during this arduous investigation, some idea may be formed from the fact, that for weeks together, even at so late a period of the proceedings as 1793, he was constantly occupied between Westminster Hall and the House of Commons without quitting them, from nine o'clock in the morning until six or seven in the evening, and often, when there was any debate of consequence, to a much later hour.

During the busiest sessions of the impeachment, 1786, 1787, and 1788, Mr. Burke's attention was of course chiefly, though not solely, occupied by its details. The other measures in which he took part were in opposing, “ with an almost overwhelming torrent of eloquence,” in the language used at the time, the extension of power to the Governor General of India by the East India Judicature Bill;\* and the declaratory act, which indirectly gave to Ministry much of the power more openly assumed by the India bill, of opposition in 1783, and for which they lost their places.

He also came forward on the constitution of the governments of Canada; on a petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and

\* What he recommended was a combination of three things—a government by law (not as in India by will)—trial by jury—and publicity in every executive and judicial concern.—Mr. Mill, who injures a good history here and there by peculiar opinions, and hasty conclusions, presumes most inconclusively against Mr. Burke's honesty or wisdom from this opposition; yet, in the same breath, approves of his remedies.



Common Council, against forestallers and regrators, the laws against whom, as a remnant of barbarism, he had been the means of repealing in 1772; in warmly approving, in the name of Opposition, the plan for the consolidation of the Customs; the vote of money for the American loyalists; the treaty with the Landgrave of Hesse, and the renewal of our continental connexions as a judicious and politic measure when adopted as part of a system; the provision for a meritorious public servant Sir John Skynner; in pushing forward the Slave Trade Abolition question now taken up by Mr. Wilberforce; and other less important matters.

The commercial treaty with France gave occasion to some bitterly-sarcastic sparring between him and the Minister. The aggression being on the part of the former may perhaps be put down to the account of party spirit, for in a subsequent speech on the same topic, which Mr. Pitt, notwithstanding their former encounter, characterized as displaying a very singular share of ability, Mr. Burke differed from the other Members of Opposition, in admitting that, though he questioned the policy of that treaty, he had not the slightest fears of its injuring our own manufactures.

While speaking on this subject, and drawing a masterly comparison of the relative circumstances and capabilities of the two countries, which drew cheers from both sides of the House, he took occasion to reply ably, but satirically, to some observations made on a former occasion by a Member, who, being one of nine said to be returned by a noble Earl, had thence acquired the ludicrous appellation of *nine pins*. Mr. Fox, entering the House at the moment of the cheer, inquired of Mr. Sheridan the cause of it. "Oh! nothing of consequence," replied the wit, "only Burke knocking down one of the *nine pins*!"

The tension of mind produced by these great public labours found occasional relaxation by short summer excursions into different parts of the kingdom, and in frequent correspondence with some old friends, and very warm admirers among his countrymen. In 1785 he wrote to Dr. Beaufort, author of an able and well-known Memoir of a Map of Ireland, to procure for him a skeleton of the enormous species of moose deer, sometimes dug up in the bogs of that country, having an inclination, as he said, to see such a stately product of his native country placed in his hall.

In October 1786, induced by "a sudden fire-side thought," as he expressed it, he and his son proceeded thither, remaining not more than a fortnight; he found time, however, to spend a day and a night at Ballitore, the last opportunity that offered of seeing these early friends on their own soil; and meeting with some of the old domestics of the establishment, not only remembered them perfectly, but behaved with his characteristic kindness and affability: an anecdote of this kind has been already related.

His arrival in Ireland was announced in the chief newspapers

in terms of warm admiration, one of which, as these faithful daily chroniclers on the whole give passing opinions pretty fairly, may be quoted—"After an absence of many years, the celebrated Irish orator and British Member of Parliament, Edmund Burke, has arrived in his native country. It is not flattery to say, that he is the boast of the English Senate, and the glory of the Irish nation." One of the first poets in that kingdom wrote some encomiastic verses on the occasion, which Mr. Burke repaid in prose more than equal in point of fancy and imagination to the tuneful effusion.\* It was deemed a little extraordinary that the University of Dublin did not then present him with the honorary

\* The following, which is the production of another, a Ballitore muse, upon the same occasion, very naturally expresses the feelings of a village on the arrival of such a guest.

### ON A VISIT PAID TO BALLITORE,

BY EDMUND BURKE AND HIS SON, IN 1786.

And what though winter's herald hoar  
Rudely deforms the trembling spray,  
The cheerful vale of Ballitore!—  
O was it ever half so gay?

What caused this sudden strange delight?—  
Has summer turn'd her steps again?  
Or does some comet's radiant flight  
This burst of loud applause obtain?

More radiant than the comet's flight,  
More welcome than the summer's day,  
'Tis Burke, our "ever new delight,"  
'Tis Burke appears,—and all is gay.

O fond delusion! idle dream!  
Let not these vain ideas rise;  
Will he to Griese's silent stream  
Withdraw him from a nation's eyes?

When pomp, and wealth, and fame, and pow'r,  
All court him to the splendid seat;  
Will he prefer the rural bow'r,  
And from admiring crowds retreat?

He will:—that heart no fetters bind,  
Repressing mem'ry's grateful swell;  
And simple nature pleased that mind,  
Where all the nobler virtues dwell.

And still he owns this classic shade,  
And still this classic shade he loves,  
Where once a careless youth he stray'd,  
Where now a wond'rous man he moves.

With love, with admiration warm,  
Behold us fondly gather round,  
To gaze upon that princely form,  
And hear once more the man renown'd.

degree of doctor of laws, but the heats of politics too often withhold the justest offerings to merit, and he was seldom heard to acknowledge that he had been highly indebted to the education or rather superintendence which he received in that seminary, though in itself a seat of undoubted learning.

In returning to England, the Reverend Doctor Campbell (author of a History of Ireland) happened to sail in the packet with him; "I don't know any thing," said the Doctor to a friend one day, "that gave me so much pleasure as to find that I was to cross the Irish Hellespont in the company of a man of whom I had heard so much. I was extremely sorry that I had not the honour of being known to any one of the passengers who could introduce me to him, but it was not difficult to provoke Mr. Burke to conversation. We were in sight of the hill of Howth just as the sun began to spread his beams. Mr. Burke enjoyed the beauties of the scenery; even the light clouds, which enveloped the top of the hill, did not escape his attention: 'I wonder,' said he, 'that some of the Dublin milliners do not form a head-dress in imitation of those many-coloured clouds, and call it the Howth-cap.'

"His conversation was rich and captivating; he told me he had passed some days at Lord Kenmare's country-seat, near the lakes of Killarney—that delightful spot, which taste seems to have selected from all that is beautiful in the volume of nature. But

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His cordial smile our zeal rewards;  
 His soothing words our hearts engage:  
 His noble courtesies regards  
 The poor man's venerable age.

And he, the youth whose cultur'd taste  
 A polish'd court's attention drew,  
 Admires the scenes his father traced,  
 And greets the friends his father knew.

And you, ye blooming stripling train,  
 This age's hope, this valley's pride,  
 What honest rapture fill'd each vein!  
 How beat each heart while Burke you eyed!

"And this is he, the child of fame,  
 Who trod our walks from care as free:  
 Now Indian echoes sound his name:—  
 Like him, O shall we ever be?"

Advent'rous youths! such talents rare  
 Hath prescient Heav'n to few assign'd:  
 But all to imitate may dare  
 The virtues of that gen'rous mind.

Here let your just desires be found,  
 The prize shall well the toil requite;  
 'Tis only with such virtues crown'd  
 Such splendid talents shine so bright.



his description of it exceeded any thing I had ever read or heard before, particularly when he touched on the flowery race; good heaven! how he clothed the lily in new-born light, and the rose in virgin blushes; in short, it may be said, that he almost coloured to the eye whatever he described. Speaking of Lord Charlemont, he praised the gentleness of his manners, and the mildness of his temper, and concluded by comparing him to an old picture, whose tints were mellowed by time. When I talked of the state of learning in Ireland, he shook his head, folded his arms, and remained silent for a few minutes. In his person he is about five feet eight inches in height (he was taller), remarkably straight for his years, but his mind is more erect than his body. There is a good deal of placidity in his countenance, but nothing of striking dignity, and, from his nose, I think that no man can sneer with more ease and effect if he chooses."

Some weeks after his return, calling in at a place in town then much frequented by lovers of antiquity and of the arts, he fell into discourse with a gentleman, a Mr. T., who possessed good taste and feeling enough to preserve the following minutes of the conversation. It must ever be a source of keen regret that so many others who were honoured by his society did not prove themselves equally worthy of it by preserving his remarks.

"December the 6th, I happened to be in Mr. Townley's study; about eleven o'clock Mr. Burke and the Reverend Doctor King came in to view Mr. Townley's fine collection of statues. Mr. Burke seemed highly pleased with the whole, particularly that of the Baian Homer. Having paid many just compliments to the taste of the collector, he entered into conversation with me in so easy and friendly a manner, that if I was charmed a few minutes before with the taste and judicious reflection of the scholar, I was not less delighted with the man. I showed him an old manuscript copy of Homer (written, I believe, in the tenth century); he read a few passages in it with the greatest fluency, and criticised some of the critics who had written on the father of immortal verse. He invited me to breakfast with him the next morning, without so much as knowing my name. I promised to do myself that honour. My name is Edmund Burke, said he, just as he was going out of the door, I live in Gerard Street, Soho. I called the next morning about nine; it was excessively cold; I was shown into the drawing-room, and in a few minutes Mr. Burke entered, and shook me by the hand in the most friendly manner.

*Mr. B.* Have you been long out of Ireland, Sir?

*T.* Some years.

*Mr. B.* I paid that country a visit last summer, for the purpose of seeing a sister, a widow (Mrs. French, I believe); I had not seen it for twenty years before.

*T.* It is very much changed within the last twenty years.

*Mr. B.* Very much for the better.

*T.* A spirit of industry has pervaded almost every quarter of the kingdom; the morals of the people are improved, the country-gentlemen, in many parts, have relinquished the favourite amusements of the chase for the plough.

*Mr. B.* Not as much as I could wish, but still more than I expected. As to agriculture, it may be called the eighth science. "We may talk what we please," says Cowley, "of lilies and lions rampant, and spread eagles in fields d'or or d'argent, but if heraldry were guided by reason, a plough in a field arable would be the most noble and ancient arms."

*T.* Very true, Sir; but it is said that the physical situation of Ireland is not favourable to the progress of tillage.

*Mr. B.* I have often heard so, but experience proves the contrary. I saw, and I saw it with pleasure, in my little tour through some parts of the south of Ireland, two or three mountains clothed with luxuriant grass, that in my time were scarcely covered with barren heath, and half starved briars.

Breakfast was now brought in; young Mr. Burke and Dr. King were present.

*T.* There are many passages in the ancient laws of Ireland that evince that agriculture flourished at a very early period in that country.

*Mr. B.* Do you mean in the Brehon laws? I wish they were translated.

*T.* I wish so too; I am sure the University of Dublin is very much obliged to you, Sir, for the fragments which you presented of the Seabright collection; they are valuable, as they contain many particulars that shed light on the manners and customs of the ancient Irish; but life is short, and, in some respect, it would be a pity that a man of genius should waste his time in such pursuits.

*Mr. B.* To set a man of genius down to such a task, would be to yoke—a courser of the sun in a mud cart. No, no, one of your cool, plodding, half-burnt bricks of the creation would be the fittest person in the world for such studies.

*T.* Colonel Vallancey has laboured hard in that mine.

*Mr. B.* Yes, in that race he has carried off the prize of industry from all his competitors, and if he has done nothing more, he has wakened a spirit of curiosity in that line, but he has built too much on etymology, and that is a very sandy foundation.

*Dr. King.* Ireland was famed for piety and learning at a very early period.

*Mr. B.* Bede says so, and several other writers.

*Dr. King.* Can you speak Irish?

*Mr. B.* I could speak a little of it when I was a boy, and I can remember a few words and phrases still. Poetry was highly cultivated by the ancient Irish; some of their kings were so

smitten with the love of song, as to exchange the sceptre for the harp.

*T.* The bards were very much protected and encouraged, but having indulged too much in satire and ribaldry, they were rather dreaded than esteemed; and, at one time, the whole body was on the eve of being banished, if St. Columb-kill had not interfered.

*Mr. B.* Sedulius was an excellent poet.

*T.* Yes, his Latin poetry is very much admired.

*Mr. B.* I read one of his hymns, that glowed with all the poet; the spirit of it might be said to ascend like the spirit of a Christian martyr in the midst of flames, but I never could light on his works.

*T.* Nor I neither, but many of his verses are scattered through Colgan.

*Mr. B.* Wherever they are scattered they will shine like stars. There was a poet that used to compose a little in his native language when I was a boy, I forget his name.

*T.* Dignum, I suppose.

*Mr. B.* Yes, yes; he could neither read nor write, nor speak any language but his own. I have seen some of his effusions translated into English, but was assured, by judges, that they fell far short of the original, yet they contained some graces "snatched beyond the reach of art." I remember one thought in an address to a friend; the poet advises him to lose no time in paying his addresses to a young lady, for that she was of age, and, as a proof of it, "upon her cheek he saw love's letter sealed with a damask rose." Spenser, who was himself a bard, says, that the Irish poetry was sprinkled with many pretty flowers. I wish they were collected in one nosegay.

*T.* Yes, Sir, but there is no encouragement.

*Mr. B.* No, not in this rust of the iron age. I wish, however, that some able, industrious, and patient pen, would give a history of that country; it is much wanted.

*T.* Great expectations were formed from Doctor Leland; he had leisure, talents, and almost every opportunity. When Lord Chesterfield was Viceroy of that kingdom, he was told that the Doctor intended to follow up a prospectus he had published on the subject of a voluminous history; his lordship one day at levee applauded the Doctor's intentions, but requested that he would make it a pleasant one.

*Mr. B.* Your pleasant historians should be read with caution. Leland promised a voluminous history, and so far he has kept his promise, but he has not done justice to all.

*T.* It is said that he had an eye to a mitre.

*Mr. B.* Mitres and coronets will dazzle, but the truth is, he had an eye to his bookseller, and, to be candid, he went over it with a heavy hand.

*T.* He has scarce dipped into the earlier ages.



*Mr. B.* He was no antiquary, but he might have said a little more on the subject. Hooker says, "the reason why first we do admire those things which are greatest, and secondly those things which are ancientest, is, because the one is least distant from the infinite substance, the other from the infinite continuance of God." Neither has he detailed with candour the feuds betwixt the houses of Desmond and Butler.

*T.* The implacable hatred that existed betwixt the two is astonishing.

*Mr. B.* Struggles for power. I remember an anecdote of one of the Desmonds, I don't know which, who happened to be severely wounded in an engagement with a party of the Butlers; one of the latter threw him on his shoulders to carry him off in triumph, and as he passed along, tauntingly asked him, "Ah, Desmond, where are you now?" though quite feeble from the loss of blood, he collected all his expiring strength, and exclaimed, "Where am I? I am where I ought to be, on the neck of my enemy."

The conversation turned on poetry, which Mr. Burke called "the art of substantiating shadows, and of lending existence to nothing." He praised Milton for the judicious choice of his epithets; this led him to say a few words on the use and abuse of those flowery adjectives, as Pontanus calls them, and lamented that some person of taste did not collect a garland of them out of the English Poets, as Textor had out of the Latin, which laid every classical scholar under great obligation to him, as he had plucked the fairest flowers that sipped Castalian dew.

"Geography, he said, was an earthly subject, but a heavenly study." One of the company happened to mention some gentlemen who intended to promote discoveries in the interior parts of Africa. Mr. Burke said, the intention was truly laudable; "Africa," he said, "was worth exploring, it seemed as if nature, in some great convulsion or revolution of her empire, had fled to that quarter with all her treasures, some of which she had concealed in the bowels of the earth, but the surface exhibited such abundance and variety of the vegetable and animal race, that a few miles would enrich the conquests of natural history. Witness on the very shores of that continent—the cabbage-tree, that towered into all the sublimity of the pine, and the luxuriance of the spreading oak, and yet so tender that a few strokes of a sabre were sufficient to lay it prostrate on the earth. Africa was rightly called the mother of monsters, for there was not a sufficient number of minor animals elsewhere to feed the huge beasts that ranged the forests in that country. He was persuaded the interior was healthy, civilized, and so fertile, that the reaper trod on the heels of the sower.

"But the thirst of European avarice and cruelty had raised a barrier round the coasts of that quarter, which prevented all communication with the inoffensive inhabitants."

“The sight of a white face was sufficient to make their curly locks stand on end. Death is natural to man, but slavery unnatural; and the moment you strip a man of his liberty, you strip him of all his virtues; you convert his heart into a dark hole, in which all the vices conspire against you.” Towards the close of the conversation, he asked me if I was acquainted with Mr. Sheridan; I answered, that I was very sorry I could not boast that honour. I shall have the pleasure, said he, of introducing you to him, for he is one of the best natured men in the universe; he accompanied me, on my departure, to the door, and told me that Dr. King was a very learned man, assured me that he would be very happy to see me at Beaconsfield, “throw yourself into a coach,” said he, “come down and make my house your inn.”

Part of the short time he had spent in Ireland was, as may be supposed from what we have already noticed, devoted to Lord Charlemont, for whom he at all times, entertained a very warm regard, frequently terming him “one of the chief ornaments of Dublin.” To this Nobleman he was in the habit of giving letters of introduction to all his friends of consideration proceeding thither on business or curiosity, among whom, about this time, were Mr. (afterwards Sir Philip) Francis, Mr. Nevill, Mr. Shippen, an American traveller, and others. He also transmitted to his Lordship, about this period, a bust of the late Marquis of Rockingham, with whom he had been extremely intimate since 1752, when they became acquainted at Rome, on their travels: it was a present from the Marchioness. Soon afterward Mr. Burke, on being elected a Member of the Royal Irish Academy, wrote him a letter of thanks, as its President.

As specimens of that air of interest and elegance he was accustomed to throw over the common affair of a letter of introduction, two or three of this description are subjoined:—

“Gerrard-street, June 1, 1787.

“My dear Lord,

“I have an high respect for your Lordship of old, as I trust you know; and as I have the best wishes for my friend Mr. Francis, I am exceedingly desirous that he should have an opportunity of paying his compliments to the person in Ireland the most worthy the acquaintance of a man of sense and virtue. Mr. Francis has not been in Ireland since the days of his childhood, but he has been employed in a manner that does honour to the country that has given him birth. When he sees your Lordship, he will perceive that ancient morals have not yet deserted at least that part of the world which he revisits, and you will be glad to receive for a while a citizen that has only left his country to be the more extensively serviceable to mankind. May I beg your Lordship to present my most respectful and most affectionate compliments, and those of Mrs. Burke and my son, and all that are of our little family, to Lady Charlemont. I hope that Mr. Francis will bring

back such an account of the health of your Lordship, and all yours, as may make us happy."

"Beaconsfield, July 19, 1787.

"My dear Lord,

"Mr. Francis called upon me in his way to his own house, charmed, as I expected he would be, with your character and conversation, and infinitely obliged by your reception of him. Give me leave to convey his thanks to you, and to add mine to them.—Every motive induces me to wish your house provided with all the ornaments that are worthy of it: the bust you desire is that which is most essential, and that in which you combine your taste, your friendship, and your principles. When I go to town, I shall see Mr. Nollekens, and hasten him as much as I can: there was no bust taken from Lord Rockingham during his life-time. This is made from a masque taken from his face after his death, and of course must want that animation which I am afraid can never be given to it, without hazarding the ground-work of the features. Tassie has made a profile in his glass, which is I think the best likeness; I mean, uncoloured likeness, which exists. I will recommend it to Nollekens; perhaps he may make some advantage of it; though I have observed that artists seldom endeavour to profit of each other's works, though not in the exact line which they profess."

"My dear Lord,

"If I were to write all that is in my heart and head relative to you, and to your proceedings,\* I should write volumes. At present I abstain from any subject but that which at this instant may give your Lordship occasion to remember me.

"My friend Mr. Shippen, of Pennsylvania, a very agreeable, sensible, and accomplished young man, will have the honour of delivering this to your Lordship. I flatter myself that you will think of him as I do: and, if you do, I have no doubt that he will find, under your Lordship's protection, every thing that he can expect (and he expects a great deal) from Ireland. He has been for some time upon his travels on the Continent of Europe; and, after this tour, he pays us the compliment of thinking that there are things and persons worth seeing in Ireland. For one person I am sure I can answer, and am not afraid of disappointing him, when I tell him, that in no country will he find a better pattern of elegance, good breeding, and virtue. I shall say nothing further to recommend my friend to one to whom a young gentleman, desirous of every sort of improvement, is, by that circumstance, fully recommended. America and we are no longer under the same Crown; but, if we are united by mutual good will, and reciprocal good offices, perhaps it may do almost as well. Mr. Shippen will give you no unfavourable specimen of the *new world*."

\* On the Regency question.



His Lordship, in return, thought he could not do better for his particular friends, bound to England, than to consign them to the care of one so celebrated, and so capable of affording them instruction and amusement. Among these, about this time, was Mr. Hardy, a member of the Irish House of Commons, and destined to be his Lordship's biographer, who, although already known to Mr. Burke, seemed to feel the charm of his society and amiable qualities, with additional force, during this visit.

"He was," says that gentleman, "social, hospitable, of pleasing access, and most agreeably communicative. One of the most satisfactory days perhaps that I ever passed in my life, was going with him *tête à tête*, from London to Beaconsfield. He stopped at Uxbridge whilst his horses were feeding, and happening to meet some gentlemen of I know not what Militia, who appeared to be perfect strangers to him, he entered into discourse with them at the gateway of the inn. His conversation at that moment completely exemplified what Johnson said of him, 'That you could not meet Burke under a shed without saying that he was an extraordinary man.'

"He was altogether uncommonly attractive and agreeable. Every object of the slightest notoriety as we passed along, whether of natural or local history, furnished him with abundant materials for conversation. The house at Uxbridge, where the treaty was held during Charles the First's time; the beautiful and undulating grounds of Bulstrode, formerly the residence of Chancellor Jeffries; and Waller's tomb, in Beaconsfield churchyard, which, before we went home, we visited, and whose character as a gentleman, a poet, and an orator, he shortly delineated, but with exquisite felicity of genius, altogether gave an uncommon interest to his eloquence; and although one-and-twenty years have elapsed since that day, I entertain the most vivid and pleasing recollection of it."

The most flattering testimony yet borne to the superiority of his public and private character, and to his senatorial and literary talents, appeared in 1787, in the celebrated Latin preface to Bellendenus, by its celebrated author Dr. Parr;\* an offering certainly of no common value either in the terms in which it was expressed, or in the quarter from which it came; a characteristic tribute of unfeigned admiration from the most learned to the most eloquent man of the age. It is known that the Doctor has written an epitaph for him which, however, he has not yet thought proper to make public.

Alluding to Mr. Burke in conversation with a friend in 1814, he mentioned this epitaph, saying it was written with the whole collected force of his mind, with his choicest Latinity, and consequently that it cost him more effort than any thing else he had

\* Since this was written, Dr. Parr has paid the debt of nature.

written. But he continued, on showing it to a sagacious friend, the latter said, "it is very good, but there is no heart in it." "True," rejoined the doctor, "I had no heart when I wrote it;" the explanation of which is, that the doctor thought Mr. Burke had sinned so much against liberty when he attacked the French Revolution, that his warmer feelings towards him were become deadened or extinguished.

His own taste in epitaph, or rather character-writing, was again put in requisition by the completion, in August, 1788, of the splendid, and in this country unequalled, mausoleum to the memory of the marquis of Rockingham, erected about a mile in front of Wentworth House, in Yorkshire, from which, as well as from the surrounding country, it forms a noble and interesting object, ninety feet high. The interior of the base is a dome supported by twelve Doric columns, with niches for the statues of the deceased nobleman and his friends, among whom the distinguished writer of the following piece now takes his stand. The inscription, for force, precision, and fitness, has perhaps, like the mausoleum itself, no equal among the mortuary remains of the country:

"CHARLES, MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM.

"A statesman in whom constancy, fidelity, sincerity, and directness, were the sole instruments of his policy. His virtues were his arts. A clear, sound, unadulterated sense, not perplexed with intricate design, or disturbed by ungoverned passion, gave consistency, dignity, and effect to all his measures. In Opposition, he respected the principles of Government; in Administration, he provided for the liberties of the people. He employed his moments of power in realizing every thing which he had promised in a popular situation. This was the distinguishing mark of his conduct. After twenty-four years of service to the public, in a critical and trying time, he left no debt of just expectation unsatisfied.

"By his prudence and patience he brought together a party which it was the great object of his labours to render permanent, not as an instrument of ambition, but as a living depository of principle.

"The virtues of his public and private life were not in him of different characters. It was the same feeling, benevolent, liberal mind, that, in the internal relations of life, conciliates the unfeigned love of those who see men as they are, which made him an inflexible patriot. He was devoted to the cause of liberty, not because he was haughty and intractable, but because he was beneficent and humane.

"Let his successors, who from this house behold this monument, reflect that their conduct will make it their glory or their reproach. Let them be persuaded that similarity of manners, not proximity of blood, gives them an interest in this statue.

"Remember—Resemble—Persevere."

## CHAPTER X.

Anecdote of Burke at Mr. Crewe's—Adventure with a poor Artist—Regency Question—Letter to Mr. Pitt—Letter to Mr. Montagu—French Revolution—Letters to M. Menonville—Letters from Edmund, the two Richards, and Mrs. Burke, to Mrs. French—Rupture with Mr. Sheridan—Correspondence with Mr. Mercer—Parliamentary Business—Mr. G. Hamilton.

DURING the period of the application to Parliament of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales for an increase of income in order to the liquidation of his debts, Mr. Sheridan, who was then supposed to stand high in the confidence of the illustrious personage, was commenting in strong terms, when dining one day at the table of Mr. Crewe, on the hardship of the case, and the disinclination shown by the executive government to assist him; concluding with a kind of authoritative assertion, that if not granted, His Royal Highness *must* discontinue the necessary repairs of Carlton House, and *must* retire from the dignity of his public station into the obscurity of private life.

Mr. Burke, who with several other members of Opposition was present, observed in reply, that though no one could wish more heartily than himself that no obstacle should be thrown by Mr. Pitt in the way of an amicable accommodation, yet even were the application refused, he saw no perfectly satisfactory reason for adopting the threatened alternative. "Admitting," said he, "that some inconveniences may be occasioned to His Royal Highness, yet on the whole it will be more wise to submit to them than to resort to retirement, which I consider extremely impolitic and ill-judged, and may induce people to believe that there is in such a mode of proceeding more of petulance than prudence; while many will be induced to question whether dignity thus easily and voluntarily thrown aside, may not in time be dispensed with altogether. Besides, *submission* is in itself a virtue, and ultimately will have its effect."

Considerable discussion ensued upon the point. It was urged that it was better not to appear in public at all, than to appear with diminished splendour; and at any rate the expenses of the public establishment alone would absorb the whole of his Royal Highness's income, leaving nothing for those private enjoyments which royalty as well as private men, look to as the chief soothers and sweeteners of life. "Taking the question even on this showing," replied Burke, "if we inquire very minutely, something may be found even for this purpose. But I must continue to think, that a Royal personage ought, in some cases, to make this among his other sacrifices. My idea is, Sir (alluding to the paramount duty of supporting the royal dignity in preference to any private gratification) that we should *starve the man* in



order to *fatten the prince*, rather than starve the prince in order to fatten the man."

"But after all, he continued, there will be no necessity for this now; I think I can make it out very satisfactorily; let us trace the outline on paper." Paper was accordingly brought. "To a palace three things are indispensable—a chapel, a library, and a riding house, to provide for the wants of religion, of the understanding at large, and of the health of the body, but our views being economical, the chaplain must likewise perform the duty of librarian. Another point I deem essentially proper, if not politically useful, that is for His Royal Highness to give a dinner once a fortnight to all the leading members of both houses of Parliament without distinction of party." He went on to state his ideas of a royal establishment on many other matters connected with public display; continuing the detail to the description and quality of the officers of the household, the number of servants, of horses, of carriages (he limited the latter to two as sufficient for all useful purposes) the necessary annual repairs of the royal residence, proceeding through every other item of probable expense down to the most minute, showing an extraordinary acquaintance with the customary wants of a palace, though so little acquainted practically with its interior—a knowledge probably acquired from the minute research necessary to perfect the details of the economical reform bill. The result of his calculation was, that after paying all state expenses, upon a scale which the company present seemed to think sufficiently liberal, there would still be a residue of £10,000, which might be appropriated to private purposes. "I always knew Burke's capacity to comprehend great things," said Mr. Courtenay, who was present on the occasion, "but I was not so well aware that he had leisure enough to master the small."

Of his desire to encourage and assist unfriended talent, or any thing that bore the semblance of talent, another instance, which occurred about this time, ought not to be omitted.

Travelling from town toward Beaconsfield during the summer, he overtook on the road a person almost overcome with heat and fatigue, and whose habiliments having evidently seen more than their due period of service, tacitly hinted that their owner found it inconvenient to provide any other conveyance than that which nature had given him. Mr. Burke, believing he saw something of character in his countenance, offered him (no uncommon thing with him to occasional travellers of not absolutely disreputable appearance) a ride in his carriage as far as their way lay together, which was of course gratefully accepted. The pedestrian proved to be a poor artist—or rather what is termed a *piece* of an artist; for having been brought up to something else, he had but lately intruded into the regions of taste, and had met with from the world

te of all intruders, a cool reception. Speci-

mens of his abilities probably meant to "shame the rogues" for their defect in judgment, he carried with him. These the orator examined; and finding some germ of talent that might in time become respectable, though not at all likely to be great, he carried him to Beaconsfield, kept him for a day or two, and dismissed him with a little money and much good advice, "to study hard and work diligently, for those alone constituted the foundations of all excellence and all success."

The man, however, having too good an opinion of himself to believe that so much work was necessary, or perhaps conceiving how much easier it was to live by the liberality of a patron than by his own plodding industry, became troublesome in his applications for pecuniary assistance. This, Mr. Burke plainly told him, it was not in his power to give to any extent; but if determined to be industrious, he would by his influence among the chief artists in the country, take care to ensure him constant employment. He also wrote him two letters of advice—one of them the writer is informed very excellent—for though promised to him, he has not yet seen it; the other is transcribed from the original now before him.

"Sir,

"I have received your letters, and if I have given you offence by not answering your first in proper time, I am sorry for it, and beg your pardon.

"You will be so obliging to recollect that the most I ever gave you the least hope of was some occasional assistance whilst you perfected yourself in drawing at such hours as you could spare from your business; as you showed me some essays in engraving by which it appeared to me (though it was too late to think of painting) you might possibly by application obtain a livelihood, or some help towards it by that art, which is lately come into very great request. More than that I could not honestly give you the least hope of; and this, I think, I repeated to you more than once. When I come to town, I shall, so far as such a trifling aid as I can afford, give you a little help.

"As to your arrangements in other respects, I am not all entitled, and feel as little disposed, to abridge your liberty by any direction of mine. It is not my custom to take upon me the regulation of any person's conduct, even of those who are better known to me than you are. It is impossible that I should have any objection to your application to the gentleman you mention, who is a man of undoubted merit, and one for whom I have much esteem.

"As to what you write about other matters, I must beg leave to suggest to you, that if you can reconcile it to your own mind to have any meddling with prophecies and prophets,\* it were more

\* Alluding to an inclination of the artist to become a follower of the prophet Brothers.

advisable to keep such thoughts to yourself; as to those who are not used to make the allowances I am disposed to make for the singularities of men, it must tend to give them very disadvantageous impressions of you. I am, with good wishes for your success,

“ Sir, your most humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Beaconsfield, Sept. 9, 1787.”

Toward the end of October, 1788, the melancholy illness of the king withdrew public attention from all other subjects to the consequent proceedings in Parliament, in which Mr. Burke, who, it might be thought, had enough to do with the complicated labours of the impeachment, was destined to take an equally conspicuous part.

It is more than doubtful whether, at the commencement of the business, this was quite congenial to his wishes. But the absence from England at first, and the subsequent illness of Mr. Fox, threw the labouring oar upon him; and a sense of party honour or necessity, joined to a conviction in his mind of the Heir Apparent being treated with injustice and disrespect by the Ministry, carried him forward to wield it with as much of energy as he had ever shown upon any occasion, but with less moderation of temper. Personal favour or aggrandizement he had no reason to expect; for above nine weeks of the emergency had elapsed when he pointedly declared in the House of Commons (22nd December)—and the omission was then well known in the political world, though remedied soon afterward,—that he knew as little of the interior of Carlton House as he did of Buckingham House. This did not in the least abate the zeal of his exertions.

A minute detail of these labours, as they may be found in all publications whether of biography or history connected with this period, it is not necessary to give here; it is sufficient to say they comprised nearly all that argument, wit, constitutional knowledge, and sarcastic ridicule, could urge, and were zealously continued in almost every debate on the subject for about two months. He contended for the *exclusive* right of the Prince of Wales to the Regency, in opposition to Mr. Pitt, who maintained that any other person approved by Parliament had an equal right to it; he strenuously resisted the two chief resolutions moved by him,—that it was the express duty of the two houses to provide a Regency, in case of interruption to the royal authority—and that they alone should determine on the means to give the royal assent to the bill constituting such a Regency.

From the following note, written about this time to Sheridan, we might almost imply, that he did not *really* think some part of the argument of Mr. Fox and himself on this subject quite so strong and decisive as they wished to impress upon the public mind.



“ My dear Sir,

“ My idea was, that on Fox's declaring that the precedents, neither individually nor collectively, do at all apply, our attendance ought to have been merely formal. But as you think otherwise, I shall certainly be at the committee soon after one. I rather think that they will not attempt to garble: because, supposing the precedents to apply, *the major part are certainly in their favour*. It is not likely that they mean to suppress,—but it is good to be on our guard.

“ Ever most truly yours, &c.

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Gerard-Street, Thursday Morning.”

The bill itself, introduced as it was with so many restrictions, he stigmatised as derogatory, injurious, suspicious, and insulting to the Prince, who was thus left to exercise all the invidious duties of government without any of its power to encourage or reward merit; he therefore debated it, clause by clause, with unabated spirit, till toward the end of February, when the happy recovery of the Sovereign at length put an end to the bickerings and personalities on all sides produced by this contention. The usual and indeed uncommon diligence with which Mr. Burke sought for information on all topics of interest, may be conceived from what took place on the present occasion: when it is known, that, besides ransacking our history for precedents or points of coincidence, he examined all the medical books treating of the disease, and visited several receptacles for persons so afflicted, in order more thoroughly to trace its general progress and results, besides being in constant attendance on the examinations of the physicians. Neither was his pen less exercised upon this occasion than any other of his powers; and credit has been given to it for a variety of short pieces published in the newspapers of the day, such as the questions to the Lord Mayor, some speeches, letters, answers, and representations said to be written for exalted personages, a few of which breathe strong insinuations against the character and designs of Administration.

These however were inferior missiles, compared with another production, which, from the quarter whence it nominally emanated, the important political sentiments it contained, the style in which they were conveyed, and the celebrity which the paper not only acquired at the moment, but has ever since retained, claimed an importance which it was suspected could only be given to it by the same gifted penman.

On the 30th December, 1788, Mr. Pitt addressed a letter to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, specifying in detail the restrictions to be imposed upon him in the exercise of his duty as Regent. The reply, which, as a matter of course, would meet the public eye, required in its composition no ordinary share of

skill, discretion, and sound constitutional feeling as well as knowledge; for while it was unavoidable for the Prince to express some displeasure at the ungenerous suspicions insinuated against his future conduct, considerable reserve became necessary even in touching upon this and upon every other part of the question, so as not to commit himself or his political friends, with Parliament, with the public, with the Queen, or with his Majesty, in case of his recovery. For the execution of this delicate duty the eyes of the party directly turned upon Burke. In his hands, while it would be sure to acquire the requisite vigour, information, and address necessary for the occasion; the heat which occasionally attended him in debate, was known to be almost wholly discarded from his compositions in the closet. This paper, though little time was given him for deliberating on the matter, fully confirmed their anticipations; indeed it is almost surprising how readily and completely he quits at a moment's notice the warmth of the partizan for the imposing dignity of the Prince. This peculiarity, combined perhaps with the known fact so recently proclaimed by himself of being little familiar with the interior of Carlton House, have frequently given birth to doubts whether he was really the author of the piece; but of this fact there is no question: a few trifling alterations indeed, said to be made in his draught of it, were emphatically pronounced at the time to be *not for the better*.

“The Prince of Wales learns from Mr. Pitt's letter, that the proceedings in Parliament are now in a train which enables Mr. Pitt, according to the intimation in his former letter, to communicate to the Prince the outlines of the plan which His Majesty's confidential servants conceive to be proper to be proposed in the present circumstances.

“Concerning the steps already taken by Mr. Pitt, the Prince is silent. Nothing done by the two Houses of Parliament can be a proper subject of his animadversion; but when, previously to any discussion in Parliament, the outlines of a scheme of government are sent for his consideration, in which it is proposed that he shall be personally and principally concerned, and by which the royal authority and the public welfare may be deeply affected, the Prince would be unjustifiable, were he to withhold an explicit declaration of his sentiments. His silence might be construed into a previous approbation of a plan, the accomplishment of which every motive of duty to his father and sovereign, as well as of regard for the public interest, obliges him to consider as injurious to both.

“In the state of deep distress in which the Prince and the whole royal family were involved by the heavy calamity which has fallen upon the King, and at a moment when government, deprived of its chief energy and support, seemed peculiarly to need the cordial and united aid of all descriptions of good sub-

jects, it was not expected by the Prince, that a plan should be offered to his consideration, by which government was to be rendered difficult, if not impracticable, in the hands of any person intended to represent the King, much less in the hands of his eldest son, the Heir Apparent of his kingdoms, and the person most bound to the maintenance of His Majesty's just prerogatives and authority, as well as most interested in the happiness, the prosperity, and the glory of the people.

“The Prince forbears to remark on the several parts of the sketch of the plan laid before him. He apprehends it must have been formed with sufficient deliberation to preclude the probability of any argument of his producing an alteration of sentiment in the projectors of it. But he trusts with confidence to the wisdom and justice of Parliament, when the whole of this subject, and the circumstances connected with it, shall come under their deliberation.

“He observes, therefore, only generally on the heads communicated by Mr. Pitt; and it is with deep regret the Prince makes the observation, that he sees in the contents of that paper a project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity, in every branch of the administration of affairs,—a project for dividing the royal family from each other—for separating the court from the state; and, therefore, by disjoining government from its natural and accustomed support, a scheme for disconnecting the authority to command service from the power of animating it by reward—and for allotting to the Prince all the invidious duties of government, without the means of softening them to the public by any one act of grace, favor, or benignity.

“The Prince's feelings, on contemplating this plan, are also rendered still more painful to him, by observing that it is not founded on any general principle, but is calculated to infuse jealousies and suspicions, wholly groundless he trusts, in that quarter whose confidence it will ever be the first pride of his life to merit and obtain.

“With regard to the motive and object of the limitations and restrictions proposed, the Prince can have but little to observe. No light or information is offered him by His Majesty's Ministers on these points. They have informed him what the powers are which they mean to refuse him, not why they are withheld.

“The Prince, however, holding, as he does, that it is an undoubted and fundamental principle of this constitution, that the powers and prerogatives of the crown are vested there as a trust for the benefit of the people, and that they are sacred only as they are necessary to the preservation of that poise and balance of the constitution, which experience has proved to be the true security of the liberty of the subject, must be allowed to observe, that the plea of public utility ought to be strong, manifest, and urgent,



which calls for the extinction or suspension of any one of those essential rights in the supreme power or its representative; or which can justify the Prince in consenting, that in his person an experiment shall be made to ascertain with how small a portion of the kingly power the executive government of this country may be carried on.

“The Prince has only to add, that if security for His Majesty’s re-possessing his rightful government, whenever it shall please Providence, in bounty to the country, to remove the calamity with which he is afflicted, be any part of the object of this plan, the Prince has only to be convinced that any measure is necessary, or even conducive to that end, to be the first to urge it, as the preliminary and paramount consideration of any settlement in which he would consent to share.

“If attention to what is presumed might be His Majesty’s feelings and wishes on the happy day of his recovery be the object, it is with the truest sincerity the Prince expresses his firm conviction, that no event would be more repugnant to the feelings of his royal father, than the knowledge that the government of his son and representative had exhibited the sovereign power in a state of degradation, of curtailed authority, and diminished energy—a state hurtful, in practice, to the prosperity and good government of his people, and injurious, in its precedent, to the security of the monarch, and the rights of his family.

“Upon that part of the plan which regards the King’s real and personal property, the Prince feels himself compelled to remark, that it was not necessary for Mr. Pitt, nor proper to suggest to the Prince, the restraint he proposes against the Prince’s granting away the King’s real and personal property. The Prince does not conceive, that during the King’s life he is by law entitled to make any such grant; and he is sure that he has never shown the smallest inclination to possess any such power. But it remains with Mr. Pitt to consider the eventual interests of the royal family, and to provide a proper and natural security against the mismanagement of them by others.

“The Prince has discharged an indispensable duty, in thus giving his free opinion on the plan submitted to his consideration. His conviction of the evils which may arise to the King’s interests, to the peace and happiness of the royal family, and to the safety and welfare of the nation, from the government of the country remaining longer in its present maimed and debilitated state, outweighs, in the Prince’s mind, every other consideration, and will determine him to undertake the painful trust imposed upon him by the present melancholy necessity, which, of all the King’s subjects, he deplures the most, in full confidence that the affection and loyalty to the King, the experienced attachment to the House of Brunswick, and the generosity which has always distinguished

this nation, will carry him through the many difficulties inseparable from this most critical situation, with comfort to himself, with honour to the King, and with advantage to the public.

“Carlton House, January 2nd, 1789.”

The jealousy and displeasure contrived to be instilled into the mind of the Queen toward her son, without reasonable grounds for such feelings, were not among the least remarkable proofs of the sinister art and insinuation exerted upon this occasion. Of some of his Royal Highness's presumed friends and advisers, particularly the heads of opposition, still worse opinions were formed. Mr. Burke about this time used to say that some pains had been more than once taken, though without any provocation on his part, to cause him to stand ill with her Majesty; in the first instance on occasion of the economical reform bill; in the second by the impeachment of Hastings, whom she thought favourably of, and was believed to patronise and support; in the third by the parliamentary proceedings on the present question. An instance of the paltry, though perhaps not unsuccessful arts, made use of on the former occasion to his disadvantage, came to his knowledge soon after it occurred, and was several times mentioned in conversation with his familiar friends, as an exemplification of a strong phrase of his own, for which he had been sometimes jocularly taken to task for using, “the low pimping politics of a court.” Her Majesty, it seems, had been accustomed to use a lemon every morning for purposes of the toilet, but immediately after the passing of the reform bill in 1782, found regularly half a lemon substituted for a whole one. Upon inquiring into the cause, she was informed it arose from the operation of Mr. Burke's bill, which under the plea of economy, was intended to diminish, or to deprive her, and those about her, of all their little comforts and conveniences—“and however contemptible the shafts,” said he, “levelled in this and other similar methods, I found they were not without their venom.”

In the vehement abuse poured out upon him during the discussions on the Regency, it has been said that he displayed a kind of triumph, or at least an indelicacy to the unhappy condition in which His Majesty was placed; a charge which his general and indeed extreme humanity upon all occasions, and a fair interpretation of his expressions such as every extempore debater requires and commonly solicits from his hearers, sufficiently refute.

It is well known indeed that he felt much too warmly upon all public topics; that he gave vent to his feelings too freely; and that he committed upon this, as upon some other occasions in his life, the fault of being too unreserved with the public at large, which, as experience has frequently proved, treats those statesmen with the least consideration who exhibit towards it the greatest

candour and confidence; so that concealment and art, though considered as the vices of a high public character, are almost necessary to such a person to enjoy the favour of those whom he serves. In debate Mr. Burke's warmth was sufficiently punished on this question by unjust insinuations in the House, by abundant abuse in the newspapers, and by cries of *order!* frequently repeated, which, being once pertinaciously urged in what he thought a frivolous or party spirit, drew from him the following observation in reply, having more than once expressed contempt at the use of this exclamation:—

“Order is an admirable thing, perfect in all its limbs, but unfortunately it squints, or can see only on that side which tells for itself. Delicacy also I have the utmost wish to preserve; but delicacy, though a being of perfect symmetry, like the former, is only a subsidiary virtue, and ought always to give way to truth, where the case is such that the truth is of infinitely more important than the delicacy.” On another occasion he observed, that “delicacy was to truth, but as the ruffle to a shirt, and he did not admire the taste of those who were content to lay aside the shirt and to display only the ruffle.”

Politicians militant commonly make the greatest excuses for each other; and there were many apologies for the warmth of Mr. Burke in the undoubted and admitted manœuvring of Ministry, which would have enabled them to jockey his friends out of the useful exercise of that power which they were on the point of acquiring, had they even gained it; likewise in the artful concealment of the design till the middle of December when it was ripe for execution; in the means made use of to instil ungenerous suspicions of her children into the mind of the Queen; in the anomalous principle of an elective regency in an hereditary monarchy; in the fraud and fiction as he strongly termed it, of making the Great Seal, a thing of wax and copper, a substitute for a King, when a living, lawful, intelligent heir was at hand; in the number and nature of the restrictions imposed; in the conflicting opinions of the physicians; and something possibly in his own increasing irritability, the common offspring of increasing infirmity and age. No one understood the necessity for such allowances, or acted more fairly upon them, than Mr. Pitt; for though keenly sensitive to the sarcasms of his opponent, particularly when taunted with being a *competitor* for the Regency with the Prince, and to which he replied by an ungenerous accusation that Mr. Burke did not wish the King to recover, the occasion had no sooner ceased than it was forgotten on the part of both; both probably feeling that, had their situations as to power been reversed, their conduct might not have materially differed.

The emergency, to any Minister, was new and difficult, but the characteristic dexterity of Mr. Pitt, and the democratical view which the preservation, or the speedy resumption of his minis-



terial power, rendered it expedient for him to take of it, tickled the popular feeling into a decided approval of all that he did. It was of course no more than natural that he should wish to retain the high and important station which he then held; and it is equally certain that had he thought there was the most distant hope of retaining it under the Regent, the restrictions upon the latter would not have been imposed. No man of any party can possibly doubt this. The justice of the restrictions was therefore, to say the least, questionable; they cast a suspicion where no suspicion ought to have fallen; and a deep manœuvre to preserve a Ministry became the means not only of impeding the useful exercise of the power of the Crown for a time, but perhaps more permanently to weaken public respect for it; a proceeding which, at any other time, or under other circumstances, Mr. Pitt himself would have most loudly reprobated.

Whatever be the opinion of that gentleman's public measures, or the purity of his motives, his private conduct certainly was manly; too unceremonious perhaps, too lofty, too unbending towards an Illustrious Personage to be consistent with the deference due to his high station in the state, though the Minister disclaimed the slightest intentional disrespect. The Chancellor displayed more art and infinitely more pliancy. Rough and knotted in character only when his official existence was not in danger, he on this occasion exhibited more of the willow than the oak in his composition, oscillating between the contending interests with a degree of elasticity of which he was previously not thought capable, and which, in the eyes of near observers, did not tend to exalt his character. For it is well known he was negotiating at Carlton House for the preservation of his office nearly up to the moment that the recovery of the King became probable. Mr. Burke, necessarily aware of this, assailed him with several sarcasms, particularly on hearing of a burst of the pathetic, accompanied by tears, from him in the House of Lords, in allusion to the afflicting condition of His Majesty, when he said, "When I forget his Majesty's favours, may God forget me!"

"The theatrical tears then shed, were not the tears of patriots for dying laws, but of Lords for their expiring places; the iron tears which flowed down Pluto's cheek rather resembled the dismal bubbling of the *Styx* than the gentle murmuring streams of *Aganippe*: in fact, they were tears for his Majesty's bread; and those who shed them would stick by the King's loaf as long as a single cut of it remained, while even a crust of it held together." Of the affectionate behaviour of the Illustrious Personage most interested in these discussions, to both parents under invidious and trying circumstances, it is more difficult to speak, as the language of truth might be mistaken for impertinent praise. But when eulogy can have no aim, and the motive cannot be mistaken

of those who speak of the fact as it deserves, it will be adduced as an example to children in every condition of life.

During the progress of this business, the correspondence of Mr. Burke with Lord Charlemont, who took the lead in the Irish House of Lords, and formed one of the deputation bearing its Address to the Prince, was frequent and confidential; he being indeed the only channel used for communication of the public opinion of Ireland, between that nobleman and his Royal Highness. Of the latter, with whom he had several interviews, he speaks highly in a letter to his Lordship of April 4th, 1789:—

“ My dearest Lord,

“ You do no more than strict justice in allowing the sincerity of my attachment to you, and my readiness on all occasions to obey your commands. My affections are concerned in your thinking so, and my pride in having it believed by as many as know me.

“ After I had received your letter of the 24th of March I lost no time in attending the P—. I cannot say that I executed your Lordship’s commission literally: I thought it better to let you speak for yourself. To have done otherwise would not have been to do justice to the P., to your Lordship, or even to the person charged with your commission. There never was any thing conceived more justly, or expressed with more elegance, than what you have said of his R. H. I did not think it right to spoil so just and so handsome a compliment, by giving it in any other words than your own. I risked more; and, without your authority, put the letter into his hands. The P. was much pleased, and I think affected. The account your Lordship has given of the state of politics in Ireland was certainly not what we could have wished, and indeed expected. It was, however, a relief to his R. H. as he found things much better than, from other accounts, he had conceived them.

“ I never had the least idea that the Opposition in Ireland could continue against the presiding Administration here, however some individuals might be on principle adverse to it. I am charmed with what I have heard of the Duke of Leinster. I am happy to find him add a character of firmness to the rest of his truly amiable and respectable qualities. Ponsonby\* then is, it seems, the Proto-Martyr. I never saw him until the time of your embassy; but I am not mistaken in the opinion I formed of him, on our first conversation, as a manly, decided character, with a right conformation of mind, and a clear and vigorous understanding. The world will see what is got by leaving a provoked, a powerful enemy; and how well faith is kept by those, whose situation is obtained by their infidelity, one would have thought that personal experience was not necessary for teaching that lesson. As to what you have

\* Afterwards Lord Ponsonby; dismissed, after the Regency question, from the office of Post-Master General.



said of the care to be taken of the Martyrs to their duty, that is a thing of course, in case an opportunity occurs. They would not be injured so much, as the leaders would be eternally disgraced, if they were not made their first objects. It would be a shame, indeed, if those who surrender should profit more by the generosity of their enemies, than those who hold out to the last biscuit might by the justice and gratitude of their friends. Here we seem to have forgot all serious business.

“I have a thousand things to say to your Lordship on the part of the P. with regard to your principles, your liberality of sentiment, the goodness of your heart, and the politeness of your manners. I think him a judge of these things, and I see that he knows the value of a compliment from one, who has his civility for every body, but the expression of his approbation for very few.”\*

It is remarkable that though every one else thought the exertions of Mr. Burke on this question very laborious, he did not seem to have the same opinion of them himself. “My time of life,” said he, writing to the same Nobleman, July 10th, on this and other matters, “the length of my service, and the temper of the public, rendered it very unfit for me to exert myself in the common routine of Opposition.” Yet he had exerted himself on several topics in parliament, with great zeal, in addition to the unceasing slavery of the impeachment in Westminster Hall.

With Mr. Fox, though without expressly naming him, he was evidently dissatisfied on the Regency question, and also with others of his coadjutors; alluding to these, and to continued ill-success, notwithstanding his extraordinary exertions, he has the following remarks in another passage of the same letter:—

“Perpetual failure, even though nothing in that failure can be fixed on the improper choice of objects, or the injudicious choice of means, will detract every day more and more from a man’s credit, until he ends without success and without reputation. In fact, a constant pursuit even of the best objects, *without adequate instruments*, detracts something from the opinion of a man’s judgment. This I think may be, in part, the cause of *the inactivity of others of our friends, who are in the vigour of life, and in possession of a great degree of lead and authority.* \* \* \*

“My particular province has been the East Indies. We have rest, or something like it, for the present; but depend upon it I shall persevere to the end, and shall not add myself to the number of those bad examples, in which delinquents have wearied out the constancy of the prosecutors. We may not go through all the charges; I fear it will be out of our power to do this; but we shall give a specimen of each great head of criminality, and then call for judgment. So far as to a general view of my sole share of business.”

\* Hardy’s Life of Lord Charlemont.



The trial of Mr. Hastings to which he so pointedly alludes in the preceding letter, had with him at least lost none of its interest; for the spirit of an animated apostrophe which he addressed to a friend on meeting him in the street, the day after the impeachment was first voted, in allusion to that and other political events of the moment, seemed still to actuate him. "What a proud day," he exclaimed, "for England!—What a glorious prospect!—Her justice extending to Asia—her humanity to Africa—her friendship to America—and her faith and good will to all Europe!"

A bold though indirect attempt was now made to detach him from the pursuit of an object upon which he had already expended so much talent and almost incredible labour and perseverance. Having incidentally stated before the House of Lords that Mr. Hastings had murdered Nundcomar by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey, the former caused a petition to be presented to the Commons by his agent Major Scott, complaining of the words as irrelevant to the matter at issue, and calculated to prejudice him in the opinion of his judges. Mr. Burke replied that they were not irrelevant; for in urging a charge of pecuniary corruption against the culprit, it was to be expected he would not let slip the opportunity of naming the agent by whom the bribe was conveyed (from Munny Begum) and the means by which such agent was afterwards got rid of when he had threatened to become an accuser. On the same subject he also addressed the following letter to Mr. Montague, who read it to the House as part of his speech.

"My dear Sir,

"With the consent, as you know, and the approbation of the committee, I am resolved to persevere in the resolution I had formed, and had declared to the House, that nothing should persuade me upon any occasion, least of all upon the present occasion, to enter into a laboured, litigious, artificial defence of my conduct. Such a mode of defence belongs to another sort of conduct, and to causes of a different description.

"As a faithful and ingenuous servant, I owe to the House a plain and simple explanation of any part of my behaviour which shall be called in question before them. I have given this explanation, and in doing so I have done every thing which my own honour and my duty to the House could possibly require at my hands. The rest belongs to the House. They, I have no doubt, will act in a manner fit for a wise body, attentive to its reputation. I must be supposed to know something of the duty of a prosecutor for the public; otherwise neither ought the House to have conferred that trust upon me, nor ought I to have accepted of it. I have not been disapproved by the first abilities in the kingdom, appointed by the same authority not only for my assistance, but for my direction and control. You who have honoured me with a partial friendship, continued without interruption for twenty-four

years, would not have failed in giving me that first and most decisive proof of friendship, to enlighten my ignorance and to rectify my mistakes. You have not done either; and I must act on the inference. It is no compliment to mention what is known to all the world, how well qualified you are for that office, from your deep parliamentary knowledge, and your perfect acquaintance with all eminent examples of the ancient and modern world.

“The House having upon an opinion of my diligence and fidelity (for they could have no other motive) put a great trust into my hands, ought to give me an entire credit for the veracity of every fact I affirm or deny. But if they fail with regard to me, it is at least in my power to be true to myself. I will not commit myself in an unbecoming contention with the agents of a criminal, whom it is my duty to bring to justice. I am a member of a committee of secrecy, and I will not violate my trust by turning myself into a defendant, and bringing forward in my own exculpation, the evidence which I have prepared for his conviction. I will not let him know who the witnesses for the prosecution are, nor what they have to depose against him. Though I have no sort of doubt of the constancy and integrity of those witnesses, yet because they are men, and men to whom, from my situation, I owe protection, I ought not to expose them either to temptation or to danger. I will not hold them out to be importuned, or menaced, or discredited, or run down, or possibly to be ruined in their fortunes by the power and influence of this delinquent; except where the national service supersedes all other considerations. If I must suffer, I will suffer alone. No man shall fall a sacrifice to a feeble sensibility on my part, that at this time of day might make me impatient of those libels, which by despising through so many years, I have at length obtained the honour of being joined in commission with this committee, and of becoming an humble instrument in the hands of public justice.

“The only favour I have to supplicate from the House is, that their goodness would spare to the weakest of their members an unnecessary labour; by letting me know as speedily as possible, whether they wish to discharge me from my present office; if they do not, I solemnly promise them, that with God’s assistance, I will, as a member of their committee, pursue their business to the end; that no momentary disfavour shall slacken my diligence in the great cause they have undertaken; that I will lay open with the force of irresistible proof, this dark scene of bribery, peculation, and gross pecuniary corruption which I have begun to unfold, and in the midst of which my course has been arrested.

“This poor Indian stratagem of turning the accuser into a defendant, has been too often and too uniformly practised by Deby Sing, Mr. Hastings, and Gunga Govind Sing, and other Banyans, black and white, to have any longer the slightest effect upon me, whom long service in Indian committees has made well acquainted



with the politics of Calcutta. If the House will suffer me to go on, the moment is at hand when my defence, and included in it the defence of the House, will be made in the only way in which my trust permits me to make it, by proving judicially on this accusing criminal the facts and the guilt we have charged upon him. As to the relevancy of the facts, the committee of the impeachment must be the sole judge, until they are handed over to the court competent to give a final decision on their value. In that court the agent of Mr. Hastings will soon enough be called upon to give his own testimony with regard to the conduct of his principal; the agent shall not escape from the necessity of delivering it; nor will the principal escape from the testimony of his agent.

“I hope I have in no moment of this pursuit, (now by me continued in one shape or other for near eight years) shown the smallest symptom of collusion or prevarication. The last point in which I could wish to show it is in this charge, concerning pecuniary corruption;—a corruption so great and so spreading that the most unspotted character will be justified in taking measures for guarding themselves against suspicion. Neither hope, nor fear, nor anger, nor weakness, shall move me from this trust; nothing but an act of the House formally taking away my commission, or totally cutting off the means of performing it. I trust we are all of us animated by the same sentiment.

“This perseverance in us may be called obstinacy inspired by malice. Not one of us however has a cause of malice. What knowledge have we of Sir Elijah Impey, with whom you know we began; or of Mr. Hastings, whom we afterwards found in our way? Party views cannot be our motive. Is it not notorious, that if we thought it consistent with our duty, we might have at least an equal share of the Indian interest, which now is almost to a man against us?

“I am sure I reverence the House as a member of parliament and an Englishman ought to do; and shall submit to its decision with due humility. I have given this apology for abandoning a formal defence, in writing to you, though it contains in effect not much more than I have delivered in my place. But this mode is less liable to misrepresentation and a trifle more permanent. It will remain with you either for my future acquittal or condemnation, as I shall behave.

“I am, with sincere affection and respect,

“My dear Sir,

“Your faithful friend and humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.”

Discussions on this matter took place in the Commons on the 27th and 30th of April, and the 1st and 4th of May, when, on the latter day, the Marquis of Graham moved that the words complained of “ought not to have been spoken,” which was carried by



a considerable majority. Mr. Bouverie immediately moved, "That the thanks of this House be given to the right honourable Edmund Burke, and the rest of the managers, for their exertions and assiduity in the prosecution of the impeachment against Warren Hastings, Esq. and that they be desired to persevere in the same." This being objected to by the Master of the Rolls as premature and improper, the previous question was moved by him and carried. The result of these votes gave considerable offence to the committee of managers. Two several meetings were held, one the same evening, the other the following morning, to consider of the propriety of surrendering at once a laborious duty, in the performance of which they were thus coldly supported; but after some discussion it was resolved to proceed.

To this result Mr. Burke, as may be supposed, mainly contributed. From the first presentation of Mr. Hastings's petition, countenanced as it obviously was by ministry, he entertained suspicion of a design indirectly to interrupt, or wholly to get rid of a proceeding, never very agreeable to the highest authority in the kingdom, by exciting disgust in the minds of those appointed to carry it on. This stratagem, as he even some years afterwards considered it, he determined should not take effect with him; and to intimate his resolution more generally that nothing short of a formal vote of the House to remove him, should slacken his exertions, the foregoing letter to Mr. Montague was written.

He prided himself on his perseverance on this occasion. Alluding to it two years afterwards in conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Wilkes, he said, "the most brilliant day of my life, and that which I would most wish to live over again, was the day I appeared at the bar of the House of Lords with the censure of the Commons in my hand. I had but an hour to prepare myself; the resolution of the other managers to proceed in the business having only just been taken. Mr. Fox strongly urged me to relinquish the prosecution at that time:—Mr. Pitt as anxiously hoped I should; but had there been no higher motive, no moral principle at work to induce me to persevere, the disgrace of such a retreat, on account of such a provocation, and the weakness of mind it would have indicated, must have proved fatal to any public character."

The following letter relates to an earlier stage of the proceedings; it is to Mrs. Sheridan, and was meant as a stimulant to the memory of her husband, whose indolence or negligence in public or private affairs, often required this species of *refresher*.

"Madam,

"I am sure you will have the goodness to excuse the liberty I take with you when you consider the interest which I have and which the public have, (the said public being at least half an inch a taller person than I am) in the use of Mr. Sheridan's abilities.

I know that his mind is seldom unemployed; but then, like all such great and vigorous minds, it takes an eagle flight by itself, and we can hardly bring it to rustle along the ground with us birds of meaner wing, in coveys. I only beg that you will prevail on Mr. Sheridan to be with us *this day*, at half after three, in the committee. Mr. Wombwell, the paymaster of Oude, is to be examined there *to-day*. Oude is Mr. Sheridan's particular province; and I do most seriously ask that he would favour us with his assistance. What will come of the examination I know not; but without him I do not expect a great deal from it; with him I fancy we may get out something material. Once more let me intreat your interest with Mr. Sheridan, and your forgiveness for being troublesome to you, and to do me the justice to believe me with the most sincere respect,

“ Madam, your most obedient

“ And faithful humble servant,

“ EDM. BURKE.

“ Thursday, 9 o'clock.”

Another, addressed to Sheridan himself, iterates something of the same feeling of the necessity for *pushing* forward his more careless colleague to the effectual performance of the important duty he had undertaken; and evidently alludes to the wit having broken a previous appointment on the subject, and his own chagrin in consequence of it.

“ My dear Sir,

“ You have only to wish to be excused to succeed in your wishes; for indeed he must be a great enemy to himself who can consent, on account of a momentary ill-humour, to keep himself at a distance from you.

“ Well, all will turn out right,—and half of you, or a quarter, is worth five other men. I think that this cause, which was originally yours, will be recognized by you, and that you will again possess yourself of it. The owner's mark is on it, and all our docking and cropping cannot hinder its being known and cherished by its original master. My most humble respects to Mrs. Sheridan. I am happy to find that she takes in good part the liberty I presumed to take with her. Grey has done much, and will do every thing. It is a pity that he is not always toned to the full extent of his talents.

“ Most truly yours,

“ EDM. BURKE.”

“ Monday.

“ I feel a little sickish at the approaching day. I have read much—too much perhaps—and in truth am but poorly prepared. Many things too have broken in upon me.”

Another measure, scarcely less dear to his reason and his feelings, was the abolition of the slave trade, for which he pronounced

(May 12th) an animated and argumentative address. "He thought the House, the nation, and all Europe under very great and serious obligations to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) for having brought the subject forward in a manner the most masterly, impressive, and eloquent. A trade begun with savage war, prosecuted with unheard-of cruelty, continued during the mid-passage with the most loathsome imprisonment, and ending in perpetual exile and unremitted slavery, was a trade so horrid in all its circumstances, that it was impossible a single satisfactory argument could be adduced in its favour."

The penal laws became another subject for the exertion of his humane spirit, (May 28th, on a bill for encouraging the growth of roots, trees, and shrubs) reprobating their number and severity, stating the whole system to be radically defective and derogatory to a civilized country, though undue punishments were still attempted to be multiplied—a course of legislation he always had opposed, and should ever continue to oppose. A revision of the whole criminal code was necessary, for in its present state it was abominable.

In pointing out the necessity for a revision of the criminal laws of the country, which he urged were wholly disproportioned in the severity of the punishments they directed against trivial offences, he was accustomed to tell a story indicative of the indifference with which these vindictive enactments were frequently permitted to pass through parliament. On an evening when an important discussion was expected to come on in the House of Commons, he entered the smoking room, which contained many members who were not usually at their posts, and on inquiring of one, who looked particularly disappointed, the cause of his dejection, received for answer—"Have you not heard then? The great debate is put off;—and I left them doing nothing but voting a few capital felonies." The admirers of Mr. Burke will be happy to find, that this subject which was so near to his heart, and the little attention to which was regretted by him still more in private society than in public, has been so ably and successfully taken up by Sir R. Peel; a measure that must render his name pre-eminent among the great benefactors of his country.

On the question of the choice of a Speaker (June 8th) he supported his friend Sir Gilbert Elliot against the Minister's friend (Mr. Addington, now Lord Sidmouth), and as a contrast perhaps to some depreciating remarks of Mr. Pitt on the Opposition candidate, laid claim to a merit which has never been denied him. "Whatever faults he (Mr. Burke) might have, he never had attempted to lower rising talents in public esteem. On the contrary, if he ever had any merit, it was in hailing those superior talents whenever he had discovered them. The blossoming abilities of young members always afforded him the highest satisfaction, because it struck him as a renovation of the stock of public



talent, and a pleasing earnest of the preservation of the constitution.”

These, with some discussions respecting libels on the House, published in the paper called the “World,” and several matters of less importance, formed his chief exertions in parliament until its rising. The cessation of labour, however, brought with it little pleasure, for the political horizon presented no cheering prospect. Something of this feeling seems to be expressed in the conclusion of the letter to Lord Charlemont, of July 10, 1789, already quoted. “As to the politics of Ireland, as I see nothing in them very pleasant, I do not wish to revive in your mind what your best philosophy is required to make tolerable.” Enjoy your Marino\* and your amiable and excellent family. These are comfortable sanctuaries when more extensive views of society are gloomy, and unpleasant, and unsafe.”

\* \* \* \* \*

At the close of this session, indeed, a period of parliamentary as well as of general tranquillity seemed at hand. No object of prominent interest was before the public. The late contest about the Regency had been set at rest by the recovery of the King. The impeachment, however fresh in the minds of its conductors, had lost much of its hold on public curiosity. And the preceding letter indicated a damp on the mind of the writer of being doomed to some degree of political inaction, a state which, though he sometimes appeared in his letters to covet, was in fact wholly alien to his temperament and habits; for these, however occasionally delighted with retirement, were in spirit and by practice of the most active description.

But a week had not elapsed after it was written, when the storming of the Bastille in Paris, the defection of the army, the lawless massacres of the mob, the flight of many of the nobility and part of the royal family, and the entire dissolution of the powers of government, seemed the consummation by open outrage of the moral disorders which for two or three years had pervaded a neighbouring kingdom.

France, in the eyes of an Englishman, had for centuries presented a striking contrast to his own country, especially in one conspicuous and leading point. Long her equal in science, in the arts, in letters, in war, abounding in men of great genius and attainments, and in clear and extended views, and pre-eminent in all the amenities of polished life, she was yet but a savage in the knowledge or proper appreciation of freedom. She had acquired all things but that alone which is the most valuable of all, and which most ennobles man in his own opinion;—the light of liberty was the only light which had not shone upon her; the

\* A beautiful villa near Dublin, commanding the whole sweep of the bay, and much of the surrounding country.

spirit to acquire national freedom was the only spirit in which she had shown herself deficient. Little desirous of amending her old institutions of despotism, she had continued quietly to submit to them for nearly two centuries after England had thrown the greater part completely off; as if example itself in this most contagious of all feelings, and occurring even at her doors, was fated to fall dead to the ground without imitation, and with scarcely a feeling of sympathy. A portion of this indifference arose from her overweening vanity. Conceited beyond all nations, she despised whatever was not her own; and wrapped up in the splendours of military glory and absolute monarchy, she not only could not understand the advantage of our more popular form of government, but contemned it as inefficient to her favourite purposes of war and aggrandizement. With characteristic self-complacency, some of her statesmen and all her courtiers, pronounced it as suited only to a people whose national spirit and manners they were pleased to say partook equally of barbarity. Some occasional consciousness of political degradation had indeed been exhibited by many of her eminent men during the preceding fifty years, but it was partial and soon forgotten. The wheels of government continued to roll on, clogged indeed by the filth which an absolute monarchy has a natural tendency to engender, but still in motion, and might have continued still to move, had not financial difficulties, soon after the close of the American war, precipitated an event for which the people in power were wholly unprepared.

To remedy these inconveniences and to restore public credit, the *Notables*, a selection from the higher order of each class of persons in the kingdom, were at length assembled, followed by the convocation of her ancient legislature, the States General, when, by very ordinary efforts of honesty and common sense, France might have acquired for herself all that could be desired in the way of freedom and security. But the mass of her people were ignorant; the nobility and clergy bigoted to invidious privileges and exemptions above other orders in the state; the ties of religion loosened in the higher and middling classes, by a most extensive and extraordinary conspiracy of Atheists and Deists; the state of morals, among the same classes, scandalously licentious; and when the moment of difficulty came, the King—himself a Lot in the midst of Gomorrah—was compelled to encounter a most alarming state of things surrounded by few good men, and scarcely a single wise one.

The scenes that ensued need not be retraced; they are painful to contemplate, and two or three centuries hence will scarcely be believed. But the deliberative body, the assembled *virtue*, and *property*, and *talent* of the nation, presented the most fearful as well as the most curious spectacle of all. It is difficult even now to tell whether knavery or folly predominated most in its proceed-

ings. It is true there were in it some clever, and many good men, but these were far outnumbered by the designing, the unprincipled, the ignorant; by dreamers, and by speculative philosophers ignorant of the first elements of political science, who, in attempting to carry their fanciful reveries into effect, converted anarchy into a species of system.

They took a constitution in hand, as a savage would a looking-glass, or a boy a Chinese puzzle; it was requisite to pull it to pieces in order to discover the cohering but hidden charm within. All the balances of the State were therefore overturned, the rights of property infringed, distinctions as old as the foundation of the kingdom abrogated. There was no attempt made to retain the shattered elements of the State which were in themselves good—no wise design, as Lord Bacon expresses it, to weed, to prune, and to graft, rather than to plough up and plant all afresh—but a seeming desire to drag up every thing by the roots, to enjoy a species of moral chaos, to revel in the luxury of inextricable confusion; and so generally was this spirit disseminated that many of the nobility and clergy, whose interests and very existence were at stake by the schemes in agitation, became the most forward instruments of their own destruction; some from a love for popularity, but the majority from utter want of foresight as to consequences. Among the Members of the Assembly, the presumed wisdom of the nation, might be seen (very soon afterwards at least) that theoretical perfection of representation so much admired by one class of politicians practically put to the test. Every class of society, almost to the offal, was, as the drama advanced, ransacked for deputies. The fruits were such as might be expected; men without wisdom, without dignity, without property, without experience, or consistency of conduct, whose meetings had little of the character of deliberation, and whose deeds, as the revolution proceeded, would, but for their atrocity, have been as laughable for folly as they were defective in every quality of grave consideration.

A curious inquirer might trace among many of its members, and among the chief agents who worked their way by their follies or daring crimes into the service of the State during the confusion, a remarkable animosity in individuals toward their former avocations or attachments.

Here were to be seen noblemen denouncing the order of nobility; ministers of a despotic monarchy calling for a republic; courtiers cutting off the king's head; priests voting religion a nuisance; lawyers overturning all semblance of law or justice; philosophers admitting of no argument but the guillotine; poets chanting the necessity for blood; painters coolly catching the finishing touches of their art in the dying struggles of the scaffold; for all these facts literally occurred. Below these again, and still more active in the work of revolutionary *puri-*



*fication*, were tradesmen—butchers, brewers, bakers, and others—busily occupied in thinning, by means of the guillotine, the mouths they had contributed to feed; and school-masters, musicians, players, dancing-masters, exterminating those orders of society, who had previously formed their chief or only means of support.

The people at large were not unworthy of such representatives, and such authorities. Paris, and much of the country, became transformed into a den of uncaged maniacs, acting the most wild and horrible extravagances, such as no country barbarous or civilized ever before offered; beyond even the murderous jollities of Ashantee. Were not the facts notorious, it would be difficult to believe that human nature had been so bad; the rights of man, ostentatiously proclaimed, and every instant atrociously violated; religion defamed and abolished, to make way for the goddess of reason; morality derided; public massacres sanctioned; anarchy legalized; quarter to English prisoners of war, disallowed by the public vote of the Deputies of the nation; proscription and bloodshed decreed to be the duty, almost the recreation, of the execrable ruffians in power; even the dead torn from their graves to undergo the most revolting indignities. All the ties that bind men together seemed to be dissolved. Obligations had no longer power to conciliate, or gratitude to bind the dependant to his benefactor; brother warred with brother; the son with his father, wherever there appeared the least hesitation in dooming to destruction all who possessed wealth, rank, or principle. For about five years all Europe gazed with affright and astonishment at this spectacle, which, embodying the crimes and barbarities of the most ferocious of mankind within the compass of a single state, rendered its government or rather its tyrants detestable, its people infamous, and liberty thus abused the direst of all curses.

In England, the first movements of the Revolution were hailed as the regeneration of a large portion of the human race. Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt tendered it their tribute of admiration. Mr. Burke alone was more cautious or more penetrating. He professed to admire the principle as much as any one; but either from that uncommon sagacity he had ever displayed on great national questions, from his greater age and consequent experience in life, from a greater knowledge of mankind, or from a clearer insight into the French character, he entertained from the first some extraordinary misgivings as to its mode of operation and result.

Few things in political history are more interesting than to trace the first symptoms of this hesitation to approve, what other and even great men thought it almost their duty, instantly, and by acclamation, to admire. Among his first sentiments on this topic committed to paper, if not the very first, was a letter to

Lord Charlemont, dated 9th of August, 1789, about three weeks after the storming of the Bastille, in which he opens his mind without reserve:—

“As to us here, our thoughts of every thing at home are suspended by our astonishment at the wonderful spectacle which is exhibited in a neighbouring and rival country. What spectators, and what actors? England gazing with astonishment at a French struggle for liberty, and not knowing whether to blame or to applaud.

“The thing, indeed, though I thought I saw something like it in progress for several years, has still somewhat in it paradoxical and mysterious. The spirit it is impossible not to admire; but the old Parisian ferocity has broken out in a shocking manner. It is true, that this may be no more than a sudden explosion; if so, no indication can be taken from it; but if it should be *character*, rather than accident, then that people are not fit for liberty, and must have a strong hand, like that of their former masters, to coerce them.

“Men must have a certain fund of natural moderation to qualify them for freedom, else it becomes noxious to themselves, and a perfect nuisance to every body else. What will be the event, it is hard, I think, still to say. To form a solid constitution requires wisdom as well as spirit; and whether the French have wise heads among them, or if they possess such, whether they have authority equal to their wisdom, is yet to be seen. In the mean time, the progress of this whole affair is one of the most curious matters of speculation that ever was exhibited.”

Nothing can be more unambiguous and unreserved, or more consistent with the active part he afterwards took, than this avowal made in the confidence of friendship—that the spirit to aim at liberty was praiseworthy, but that the ultimate approval by wise and good men must depend upon the manner in which that desire should be carried into effect. The apprehensions which overshadowed his mind are obvious in this letter, and similar sentiments were communicated, both verbally and in writing, to other friends. His judgment might be said (without a figure) to be suspended over it like the sword of Damocles, and with almost equal power to destroy.

In the mean time, with his accustomed diligence, no means were left untried of procuring information, desiring all his acquaintance in Paris, and all who were going thither, to transmit him whatever they could collect, whether of a private nature, or the more public documents which might appear on either side. Among his correspondents at this moment, besides M. Dupont and other natives of distinction of the reasonable class of well-wishers to freedom, were others, mostly foreigners, of a different stamp; such as Mr. Christie, the noted Thomas Paine, and the equally notorious Baron (otherwise Anacharsis) Cloutz; the



two latter more especially, who, though in principle the very fanatics of revolution and republicanism, were at this moment fated to supply, unintentionally on their part, some of the materials which Mr. Burke, with equal speed and dexterity, sharpened into their most powerful antidotes.

To another correspondent, M. de Menonville, a relation of the Baron de Menou and a member of the National Assembly, who requested his opinion of their affairs towards the end of September, 1789, he wrote early in the following month, plainly exhibiting the gradual development of his opinions and apprehensions, as events took a more decided turn :

“As you are pleased to think, that your splendid flame of liberty was first lighted up at my faint and glimmering taper, you have a right to call upon me for my sentiments on whatever relates to that subject. \* \* \* \*

“You may easily believe, that I have had my eyes turned with great curiosity, and no small concernment, to the astonishing scene now displayed in France. It has certainly given rise in my mind to many reflections, and to some emotions. These are natural and unavoidable; but it would ill become me to be too ready in forming a positive opinion upon matters transacted in a country, with the correct political map of which I must be very imperfectly acquainted. Things, indeed, have already happened so much beyond the scope of all speculation, that persons of infinitely more sagacity than I have ought to be ashamed of any thing like confidence in reasoning upon the operation of any principle, or the effect of any measure. It would become me least of all to be so confident, who ought at my time of life to have well learned the important lesson of self-distrust—a lesson of no small value in company with the best information—but which alone can make any sort of amends for our not having learned other lessons so well as it was our business to learn them.

“I beg you once for all to apply this corrective of diffidence in my own judgment to whatever I may happen to say with more positiveness than suits my knowledge and situation. Never suppose that any appearance that I may show of disapprobation to what is now transacted is meant to express more than a doubt. We have but one advantage over you in France—we are nearer to the character of cool bye-standers.

“You hope, Sir, that I think the French deserving of liberty. I certainly do. I certainly think that all men who desire it, deserve it. It is not the reward of our merit, or the acquisition of our industry. It is our inheritance. It is the birth-right of our species. We cannot forfeit our right to it, but by what forfeits our title to the privileges of our kind, *I mean the abuse or oblivion of our national faculties ; and a ferocious indocility, which makes*



*us prompt to wrong and violence, destroys our social nature, and transforms us into something little better than a description of wild beasts.* To men so degraded, a state of strong constraint is a sort of necessary substitute for freedom; since, bad as it is, it may deliver them in some measure from the worst of all slavery, that is, the despotism of their own blind and brutal passions. You have kindly said that you began to love freedom from your intercourse with me. Permit me then to continue our conversation, and to tell you what the freedom is that I love. It is not solitary, unconnected, individual, selfish liberty. It is social freedom. *It is that state of things in which the liberty of no man, and no body of men, is in a condition to trespass on the liberty of any person, or any description of persons, in society.* This kind of liberty is indeed, but another name for justice, ascertained by wise laws, and secured by well-constructed institutions. I am sure that liberty so incorporated, and in a manner identified with justice, must be infinitely dear to every man, who is capable of conceiving what it is. But whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is, in my opinion, safe. I do not believe that men ever did submit, certain I am that they never ought to have submitted, to the arbitrary pleasure of one man, but under circumstances, in which the arbitrary pleasure of many persons in the community, pressed with an intolerable hardship upon the just and equal rights of their fellows. Such a choice might be made as among evils. The moment *will* is set above reason and justice in any community, a great question may arise in sober minds, in what part or portion of the community that dangerous dominion of *will* may be least mischievously placed. \* \* \* \*

“I have nothing to check my wishes towards the establishment of a solid and rational scheme of liberty in France. On the subject of the relative power of nations, I may have prejudices; but I envy internal freedom, security, and good order, to none. When, therefore, I shall learn that in France, the citizen, by whatever description he is qualified, is in a perfect state of legal security, with regard to his life, to his property, to the uncontrolled disposal of his person, to the free use of his industry and his faculties;—when I hear that he is protected in the beneficial enjoyment of the estates to which, by the course of settled law, he was born, or is provided with a fair compensation for them; that he is maintained in the full fruition of the advantages belonging to the state and condition of life in which he had lawfully engaged himself, or is supplied with an equitable equivalent;—when I am assured, that a simple citizen may decently express his sentiments upon public affairs, without hazard to his life or liberty, even though against a predominant and fashionable opinion;—when I know all this of France, I shall be as well

pleased as every one must be, who has not forgot the general communion of mankind, nor lost his natural sympathy in local and accidental connexions."

This paper, though not published by one of Mr. Burke's friends, is in itself too masterly and too characteristic, to be mistaken for the work of any other writer of the age; and the sentiments surely are such as the most ardent lover of liberty cannot find fault with. In a second communication to the same correspondent, he becomes more explicit as the scene itself becomes changed:

"With regard to the state of things in France, I am afraid that as matters appear to me at present, I cannot at all agree with you, until at least my information is as good as your's. I hope you do not think me weak enough to form my opinion of what is doing there from the representations in newspapers, much less upon those of the newspapers of a country in which the true spirit of the several transactions cannot be generally known.

"As for me, I have read, and with some attention, the authorized or rather equally authentic documents on this subject; from the first instructions to the representatives of the several orders, down to this time. What else I have read has been for the greater part on the side of those who have a considerable share in the formation and conduct of public measures. A great many of the most decisive events, I conceive, are not disputed as facts, though, as usual, there is some dispute about their causes and their tendencies. On comparing the whole of fact, of public document, and of what can be discerned of the general temper of the French people, I perfectly agree with you, that there is very little likelihood of the old government's regaining its former authority. Were the king to escape from his palace, where he is now, in reality, a prisoner with his wife and almost his whole family, to what place could he fly? Every town in France is a Paris. I see no way by which a second revolution can be accomplished. The only chance seems to consist in the extreme instability of every species of power, and the uncertainty of every kind of speculation. In this I agree with you: in most other particulars I can by no means go so far. That a police is established in Paris, I can readily believe. They have an army, as I hear, of 6000 men, apparently under their command. \* \* \* \* They have the means of preserving quiet; and since they have completely attained their ends, they must have the disposition. A total anarchy is a self-destructive thing. *But if the same ends should hereafter require the same course, which have been already pursued, there is no doubt but the same ferocious delight in murder, and the same savage cruelty, will be again renewed.* If any of those horrid deeds, which surely have not been misrepresented to us, were the acts of the rulers, what are we to think of an armed people under such rulers? Or if (which possibly may



be the case) there is in reality and substance no ruler, and that the chiefs are driven before the people, rather than lead them; and if the armed corps are composed of men who have no fixed principle of obedience, and are embodied only by the prevalence of some general inclination; who can repute himself safe among a people so furious and so senseless?

“As to the destruction of the Bastile, of which you speak, we both know it was a thing in itself of no consequence whatever. The Bastile was at first intended as a citadel undoubtedly; and when it was built it might serve the purposes of a citadel. Of late, in that view, it was ridiculous. It could not contain any garrison sufficient to awe such a city as Paris. As a prison it was of as little importance. Give despotism, and the prisons of despotism will not be wanting, any more than lamp-irons will be wanting to democratic fury.

“In all appearance, the new system is a most bungling and unworkmanlike performance. I confess I see no principle of coherence, co-operation, or just subordination of parts in this whole project, nor any the least aptitude to the conditions and wants of the state to which it is applied, nor any thing well imagined for the formation, provision, or direction of a common force. The direct contrary appears to me. \* \* \*

“Man is a gregarious animal. He will by degrees provide some convenience suitable to this his natural disposition: and this strange thing (*the system adopted by the National Assembly*) may some time or other assume a more habitable form. The fish will at length make a shell which will fit him. I beg pardon for dwelling so long, and employing so much thought upon a subject on which its contrivers have evidently employed so little. I cannot think, with you, that the Assembly have done much. They have, indeed, *undone* a great deal; and so completely broken up their country as a State, that I assure you, there are few here such *antigallicans* as not to feel some pity on the deplorable view of the wreck of France. I confess to you, that till I saw it, I could not conceive that any men in public could have shown so little mercy to their country.

“You say, my dear sir, they read Montesquieu—I believe not. If they do, they do not understand him. He is often obscure, sometimes misled by system; but on the whole, a learned and ingenious writer, and sometimes a most profound thinker. Sure it is that they have not followed him in any one thing they have done. Had he lived at this time, he would certainly be among the fugitives from France. With regard to the other writers you speak of, I do believe the directors of the present system to be influenced by them! Such masters! Such scholars! Who ever dreamt of Voltaire and Rousseau as legislators? The first has the merit of writing agreeably; and nobody has ever united blasphemy and obscenity so happily together. The other was not a



little deranged in his intellects, to my almost certain knowledge. But he saw things in bold and uncommon lights, and he was very eloquent.—But as to the rest, I have read long since the *Contrat Social*. It has left very few traces upon my mind. I thought it a performance of little or no merit; and little did I conceive that it could ever make revolutions, and give law to nations. But so it is. I see some people here are willing that we should become their scholars too, and reform our State on the French model. They have begun; and it is high time for those who wish to preserve *morem majorum* to look about them.”

At the time this was written, few indeed could agree in opinion with the sagacious writer, of the evils attendant on the Revolution. Yet, after every allowance for the generous feelings of the moment in favour of a phantom which bore some resemblance to freedom, all considerate men must have been convinced, that the utter subversion of every institution long established in a State, can never, under any circumstances, be justifiable or wise. Even great changes in the supreme authorities, though, perhaps, sometimes necessary, are always fearfully dangerous. They must not be adopted but in the last extremity, and then managed only by the most delicate and experienced hands. Earthquakes and hurricanes possibly produce good, but few sober men like to be within the sphere of their operation. It is just so with revolutions. The good is often problematical. The way to it at least is through a bog of confusion and evil, a quagmire of moral desolation—of over-turned laws, property, and connexions—in which wantonly to throw down every ancient land-mark, is wilfully to wander out of the road, to sink deeper at every step we take, and to plunge into inextricable difficulties which destroy every hope of attaining the destination in view. Such, however, was the effect of example, that many persons in England, disregarding the blessings of the practical freedom they enjoyed, professed not only to admire the speculative reveries of France, but a wish to put some of the principal of them into practice. The delusion was widely spread and deeply-rooted,—more general, indeed, than it is now easy or agreeable to believe; nor did it, with a few even of our greatest men, speedily pass away.

A domestic affliction, about this time, detached his mind for a moment from contemplating public evils, to experience personally unfeigned private sorrow—a more vulnerable point of suffering, as even the most patriotic spirit must confess, to all men. This was the death of his sister, Mrs. French. A variety of private circumstances had tended to keep up little more than an epistolary communication during life, yet still with a hope fondly entertained by both, of spending the evening of their lives nearer to each other. To a friend and neighbour of Mrs. French's family (Oliver Dolphin, Esq. of Loughrea, Ireland) he addressed the following letter, shortly after hearing of the melancholy event.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have just received the afflicting news of my poor sister’s death. You who knew her best, know the loss that I have had. Indeed, though four and twenty years have passed since I had the happiness of seeing her, her virtues, which endeared her to me much more than our nearness of relation, have made this misfortune truly afflicting to me. The will of Providence had separated us for a great (the much greater) part of our lives—and now the same Sovereign dispensation has separated us on this side of the grave for ever. She was one of the best-hearted of the human race. I was in some hopes at times that I might make the latter part of a life spent under difficulties and afflictions a little pleasant to her. But that hope, which I believe was hers, and my consolation is vanished—and this is one of the greatest and most mortifying disappointments I have felt through life.

“ Sir, I do not know in what relation you stand to a gentleman of your name, Mr. Redmond Dolphin, whom very many years ago I had the honour of knowing and esteeming, as all did with whom he was acquainted. Whatever your relation to him may be, your relation to me by your kindness to my poor sister, and your protection to my afflicted niece, is very close and strong. I am indeed infinitely obliged to you. Continue to comfort her with the same humanity with which you have begun, until my friend Mr. Kiernan can do something for her settlement. I am afraid that my poor sister had not the consolation of seeing him before her departure. \* \* \*. Be assured that I am thoroughly sensible of my obligations to you and to your family, to whom I have not the happiness to be known, but to whom I wish you to present my most sincere acknowledgements.

“ I am, with the greatest respect and regard,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your most faithful and obliged humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Beaconsfield, Jan. 12, 1790.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Since the above was transcribed for the press, the following letters, in the original, addressed to Mrs. French by her brother Edmund, his lady and son, and also from her brother Richard, have been put into the hands of the writer by a gentleman whose relationship to the parties renders his communications as valuable and authentic as they are kind. Those given here are a selection from among many others which relate solely to family affairs. They are a discovery made only within a few weeks, having been, it appears, carefully put away in a bundle of other papers, deposited with an intimate friend of Mrs. French’s family, and not opened for a period of nearly forty years.

The first is from Mrs. Burke, the wife of Edmund, addressed to Mrs. French on her marriage, by which it appears that her



zealous and industrious husband, who had just commenced his first session with the Rockingham party, was so immersed day and night in ministerial business, that he had only time to add a short postscript to the letter, expressive of his satisfaction on the occasion.

“I most truly and affectionately wish you, my dear sister, joy on the change you have made in life. It is a change that I make not the least doubt will insure happiness to you, and to all your friends the pleasure and satisfaction that an union made by you must give them; we are all very happy in being connected with a man of Mr. French’s character, which Mr. Ridge has very fully and very satisfactorily given us. I wish you many years to enjoy the satisfaction and happiness that lies before you; and many years I hope you will live to enjoy it: I can only add my prayers and hearty wishes that you should, which I do from the bottom of my heart. I leave it to you, and surely I cannot leave it in better hands, to make my love to Mr. French. I wish I had it in my power to wish you both joy myself by word of mouth; but I hope before the summer is over I shall do so, as we think, if possible, to take a turn to Ireland about that time.

“I had wrote thus far when I got your letter, and it makes us all very happy to hear you are well, and so much pleased with your present situation. Ned is so taken up that he has scarce time to eat, drink, or sleep; he has not been in bed this week until three or four o’clock in the morning, and his hurry will not be over, I am afraid, the whole winter. If he can he will add to this, but if he should not be able so to do, I am sure you will not doubt of his love and affection for you both. Dick\* is not yet come home, but we expect him every day, nay he may be here before I seal this, and if he is, you shall hear of him.

“Your nephew† is grown very stout, strong, and tall; he is at school about four miles from town, at present learning Latin, and very eager he is at it; he does not forget his aunt Julia, nor her goodness to him. He is to be home on Saturday for a week, which he has got on account of his birth-day, so that you see what consequence a birth-day is to us now.

“Mr. William Burke desires I would assure you from him how happy he is at every thing that gives you pleasure, and that he sincerely wishes you joy on the present occasion. My father joins in the same wish, and in love and compliments to Mr. French and you: believe me, my dear sister, no one more truly and affectionately loves you, or wishes for every happiness to attend you more than your affectionate sister and humble servant,

“JANE BURKE.

“Queen Anne Street, Feb. 6, 1766.”

\* Richard Burke.

† R. Burke, Jun., her son.



The P. S. from Edmund bears evident traces in the MS. as well as in the style, of being written in haste.

“My Dear Julian,

“Upon my word I have only time to say I most heartily wish you and Mr. French much joy; and to you both the good sense and good nature to make it your endeavour to contribute all you can to one another’s happiness: I wish you both many years enjoyment of it, and am, with my regards to my brother, my dear Julia,

“Your most affectionate,

“E. BURKE.”

The following, written by the mother of Edmund, Mrs. Mary Burke, to her niece, Mrs. Henessy, gives an account of her daughter, (Mrs. French’s) confinement of the daughter who afterwards became Mrs. Haviland; and likewise some particulars of her son’s visit to Loughrea immediately after the dissolution of the first Rockingham administration, with a just tribute of maternal admiration to his heart and understanding.

“Loughrea, October 25, 1766.”

“My dear Nelly,

“The last post brought me your very agreeable and welcome letter, and I am greatly pleased to hear that you and our friends with you are all well, and am sure it will be very agreeable to you to hear that poor Julia is doing as well as can be expected \* \* \*. It happened on the evening of the day that her brothers and sister set off for Dublin.

“I believe I need not tell you that my pleasure in having them here, where I kept them constantly in view during the period of their stay, was heartily dashed at parting. All the gentlemen and ladies of this town and neighbourhood made a point to visit them, and they had as many invitations to dinner, had they thought fit to accept them all, as would have occupied a great many days. Mr. French, of Rasan, was (absent) in Corke when they came to this country; but on the morning after his arrival, he, Miss Nagle, Mrs. O’Flaherty, and Miss Driscoll came here, and two days after we were all engaged at Rasan, where we dined, and could not well get from thence that night, and it was with much to do Jane and I could get away.

“Mr. French (of Rasan), Ned and Dick went to look at Galway, and at a great lake which is near to it: as soon as they arrived in the town the bells were set ringing in honour of them; on the Monday following the Corporation met and voted the freedom of the City to Ned, to be sent to him in a silver box. My dear Nelly, I believe you’ll think me very vain, but as you are a mother, I hope you will excuse it. I assure you it is not the honours that are done him which make me vain of him, but the goodness of his heart, than which I believe no man living has a

better; I am sure there cannot be a better son, nor I think a better daughter-in-law, than his wife. I will say nothing of Dick, for you would have no longer patience with me \* \* \* \*.

“This is a very agreeable town to live in, and I believe there is not another in Ireland so small that has in it so many families of fortune as residents. I hope to be in Dublin about the middle of next month, where I shall find a great change from a very good table of two courses, and abroad a coach and six to take the air, to return to a leg of mutton, and otherwise a plain style of living at home and of going abroad. However, I will be as content with the latter as with the former, and will think myself very happy if it pleases God to preserve me the few children I have left alive and well \* \* \* \*. I have filled my paper, and have only room left to wish you all happiness, and to believe me to be

“Your most affectionate aunt,

“MARY BURKE.”

Some further particulars of the election for Bristol are given by Mr. Burke himself in the following communication, written from the scene of contest—

“My dear Sister,

“I seldom write to you or to my brother French; I am a bad correspondent at the best. But believe me, you are neither of you ever out of my mind or estranged from my affections. If it were in my power to contribute any thing to your ease, advantage, or satisfaction, I would most cheerfully do it. But the part I have acted, and must continue to act, whilst things continue as they are, makes me a very insignificant person. The only recompence I have is, that I sometimes receive some marks of public approbation. I know it will give you both pleasure to hear, that after having been elected for Malton in Yorkshire, several respectable people of this city invited me to stand a candidate here, and that I am elected by a majority of 251, after one of the longest and warmest contests that has been remembered. The party that has lost the election threatens a petition; but I am satisfied they have no solid grounds to proceed upon. The election has lasted a month. I was put in nomination several days before I came hither. My absence gave the other party great advantages. My brother, who was in London, when the messengers from this city arrived at my house there, came to Bristol and prevented our affairs from suffering so much as otherwise they would have done by my absence. For I was then two hundred and twenty miles from London, and two hundred and seventy at least from Bristol. This event has given us all great satisfaction, and will give, I trust, a great deal to you. This is the second city in the kingdom; and to be invited, and chosen for it, without any request of mine, at no expense to myself, but with much charge and trouble to



many public-spirited gentlemen, is an honour to which we ought not to be insensible.

“Your sister was well when I heard from her. Since I left London thieves broke into our house in town; but they were discovered before they could take away any thing valuable; and Mrs. Burke, who is used to receive expresses at all hours of the night, hearing an alarm in the house, thought it an express from Bristol, and therefore was much less frightened than otherwise she would have been. The robbers made their escape.

“Your nephew Richard has returned from France, and is now at the University of Oxford. Your brother joins me in the most affectionate regards to you, to my brother, and your little one. Adieu my dear sister, and believe me your ever affectionate brother,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“Bristol, Nov. 2nd, 1774.”

To his cousin, Mrs. Henessy, he was obliged to communicate the disappointment of some hopes he had been inadvertently the cause of exciting—

“My dear Nelly,

“I send you enclosed the copies of two letters, which cannot be more displeasing to you than they were to me. I send them to let you see, when I gave you hopes, I had reason to hope myself, and that if you are as you must be, cruelly disappointed, the fault is not mine. The gentleman, the copy of whose letter you have, is a young man of an excellent character, large fortune, and my particular friend. I had not the least idea given to me of a purchase, I had never heard of any such thing before in the Company’s service; and I had actually given my thanks to this gentleman, and to another friend, as for a favour gratuitously obtained. The cause of my turning my thoughts to a military establishment in India for your son, was upon an application from Mrs. French, of Rahasane, to procure a Cadetcy for a friend of hers. Whilst I was in pursuit of this object my friend pointed out to me a Lieutenantcy in the new Corps, as a thing much better, and, as he conceived, full as easily obtained. He spoke so warmly, and just at that instant I seemed to have so good an interest, that I spoke for two. My first thoughts were for James Nagle, of the Somersetshire Militia, who has already engaged in the military line, but on a peace would be left wholly unprovided and helpless.

But on further recollection, as he has some immediate means of subsistence, and that as it was not impossible that between this and the time of peace I might get him into some old regiment, I turned my mind to you; and actually got from Mr. Pitt\* a power of changing my nomination. I actually got a promise both for

\* A relative of the future Minister.



Mrs. French's friend and for your son. How I have been disappointed you see.

"This, my dear friend, is a true history of the affair, an affair perfectly vexatious to me. I am not apt to raise expectations in my friends. The part which my opinion of duty obliges me to take in public gives me no opportunity of serving them; and I should be sorry to become the means of deceiving them. Ned Barrett sticks in my stomach for many years. But I believe he is good enough to think that if I have deceived him, I was first imposed on myself. My wife desires her affectionate compliments to you, to your father, and the whole family. My brother and son are on the Circuit, one in the North, the other in the West. Will you forgive the disappointment I have caused to you?"

"I am ever with sincere affection,

"My dear Cousin,

"Your faithful friend and kinsman,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Beaconsfield, Sept. 5, 1781."

Immediately after the accession of the Whigs to office in 1782, the event was communicated to their relation, in the following joint letter from the two Richards, uncle and nephew, and Mrs. Burke—

"My dear Sister,

"I should not know how to begin or end a letter to you, if I had not the most perfect reliance on your good nature and love for us all. Indeed my dearest Julia, my long cruel silence has not been from neglect, much less from choice. Surely our sister will not think that she was for a moment forgot by either of her brothers, by her sister, to whom she is very dear, or her nephew, to whom we are all dear. We do not choose, however, to enter into many particular reasons for that silence in a past letter; we entirely trust to your good sense, and your good nature on that occasion.

"I am very sorry that it was not in the power of any of us to be the first to inform you of the late changes; your nephew during the whole time was absent from town on the Northern, and I, on the Western Circuit. Edmund was too much involved in business, and I am very little less. You have, however, some time since been fully informed of the late changes here; and you, therefore, know, that after seventeen years of the most laborious and general service, His Majesty has been pleased to take your brother Edmund into his more immediate service. He is Paymaster, and sworn into the Privy Council. Richard is his Deputy Paymaster, and I (through him), am Secretary to the Treasury, an office perfectly to my satisfaction in every respect. My dear sister, you have been the first object of Edmund's thoughts and attention, and measures are already taken for putting you and your daughter at your ease; for the present we send for your immediate use one hundred pounds English, through Mr. Kiernan. He will forward this

letter to you, and receive your direction for the money. May God, my dear sister, bless you and your child; kiss her for us, and tell her that we love her heartily, and bid her love us even without knowing us. Adieu, my dear woman, and believe me,

“Your truly affectionate brother,

“RICHARD BURKE.

“London, 6th April.

“Let us hear from you immediately; direct to either of us or to your sister.”

“My dearest Aunt,

“Since I have so long delayed what I ought long ago to have done, I mean opening a correspondence with you, I am happy to be able to do it at a moment which promises that our acquaintance will not be confined to letters. Till very lately my hopes of seeing you were far removed, now I trust we shall not be very long asunder. There is nothing more near my heart than to see all those united together in place and in happiness, who, I trust, are most cordially so in affection. You hardly remember me I am afraid; if you do it is but as a child; since I have been otherwise you have no great reason to be pleased with me. I only remember you by the impressions which your kindness to my childhood made on me. Some day or other I hope to convince you that they are strong and sincere; at present I can only persuade you of my affection, by telling you, that as I love my father and my uncle, for their sakes, with whom I am more acquainted, I cannot be indifferent to you. Do me the favour to write to me, and let me know all circumstances which concern you and yours. There is one person in whom I am much interested; her indeed I do not know, for she was born since I saw you. I mean my cousin. Assure her of my sincere affections. She is indeed the nearest relation I have that any way approaches to my time of life. I wish most impatiently to see both her and you, and, as many of the circumstances which have separated us are now removed, that time is, I hope, not far distant. My father and uncle are both in perfect health, particularly the first, I believe a little altered from what you remember them, but not much. My mother perfectly well; she will conclude this letter by telling you that she loves you. Give my love to my Cousin, and desire her to write to me. Adieu my dear Aunt, and believe me to be your affectionate and dutiful nephew,

“RICHARD BURKE.

“London, April 7th, 1782.”

“My dear, dear Sister,

“I never wrote to you with more heartfelt satisfaction than I do at present, for I can tell you, that now we can be a comfort and use to you, my dear sister, and my dear little niece, whom we all love. I got your letter, and the deed is making out to enable Mr.

Burke to resign the lease in Mr. William Burke's name. But as you have the lease, we ought to know whether the old lease is for lives or years. This you must tell us as soon as possible. Mr. Burke says you may now, as you have *qualified*,\* take it in your own name, which will be the best way of doing it. My love to my little niece, and I am, dear sister, ever yours affectionately,

“JANE BURKE.

“April 6th, 1782.”

After the accession of the Coalition Ministry to office, when her brother's prospects again brightened, Mrs. French received the following (among others, not preserved) from Mrs. Burke, expressive of the anxiety of the family to do all in their power for their niece—

“Charles-street, April 5, 1783.

“My dear Sister,

“I have now news for you, that will again make you happy, and consequently I could not let any time pass without letting you know it. Yesterday your brother Ned kissed the King's hand on being appointed Paymaster, and your brother Richard is again Secretary of the Treasury.

“You shall hear from some of us in a post or two, with something to enable you to go on. Now, my dear sister, it is time for you to fix upon some scheme for my niece's education; the sending her to France for a couple of years will be your only plan, and no time ought to be lost.

“God bless you, we all love you, and we tell her so.

“I am, my dear Sister, ever most affectionately,

“JANE BURKE.”

“My dear Sister,

“You are much better to me than I deserve, by your very kind and affectionate uneasiness about my health. If great affection for you and my niece is a merit, which I consider none, that I have for you both, most truly and cordially; you are my only sister, and a good one; why then should I not love you? So God bless

\* This alludes to the repeal some time before of certain clauses in the Penal Laws against the Roman Catholics. Mr. Burke had good reason to detest this abominable code, not merely as an enlightened statesman, but from the evil effects it had produced in his own family. Mr. French, who was of that communion, possessed a handsome personal property at the time of his marriage with Miss Burke, but being unable to purchase lands, or otherwise invest it in a secure and permanent way on account of being restricted in such disposal of his money, by the grinding oppression of the laws in question, embarked it in building houses on the lands of others, and in farming and grazing upon an extensive scale. In neither pursuit was he very successful. A great mortality among sheep and cattle some years afterwards almost ruined him; and between repairs, bad tenants, and the lapse of leases, his houses proved little more profitable. The consequence was the involvement of his family in occasional difficulties, which Edmund, out of his own scanty income, relieved at all times with a generosity and kindness truly characteristic of the man, and of which (and to others as well), were it necessary ostentatiously to parade such matters before the public—the writer could furnish a great variety of instances.



you, and make you happy here in your child and friends ; and hereafter, as we all hope and wish to be.

“ I am anxious about the settlement of my niece in France for a couple of years ; I think Mrs. French,\* who is a well bred sensible woman, will be the best qualified of any person I know, to direct and advise you upon that head ; she has had experience herself, having had her children abroad for education ; take her opinion about it, and through her friendship and advice direct yourself. The difficulty will be to get her to France ; if you could meet with a sober, discreet clergyman to go with you and her, and when you see her safe lodged, return with you again, that would be the best way to get her over. For as to your staying with her, it would be very uncomfortable to you, not speaking the language of the country ; and a disadvantage to my niece, to have any one near her that spoke English. Let her be placed so as to bring her forward as fast as possible ; for she has no time to lose at her time of life ; and I am sure she will have sense enough to make use of her time, to enable her to come back to her friends, accomplished as they wish, and hope to see her. Perhaps your friends in Cork may be able to put you in a way of going into France. On your return, you can take us in your way. My dear sister, I need not tell you, I hope, how happy I should be to see you, and the pleasure it would give your brothers and nephew, it would indeed make us all very happy. They all join me in love and blessing to you and my niece, whom we love as a child of our own. God for ever bless you.

“ I am, my dear Sister,

“ Ever and ever yours, most affectionately,

“ JANE BURKE.

“ London, May 20, 1783.”

On Mr. Burke's visit to Dublin in 1786, he could not find sufficient leisure, it being, as already remarked, a rapid and unpremeditated journey, to visit his sister ; and the regret of both father and son on this occasion was expressed in a letter from each.

“ My dear Sister,

“ I am now in Dublin with my son ; and it is to us both, I assure you, a matter of the most sincere concern, that we should be on the same side of the water with you and my dear niece, without having it in our power to indulge ourselves in the satisfaction which we have long and earnestly wished to embrace you and her. But as the thought of coming hither at all was sudden, so it was very late, and we shall not be able to give ourselves a week more (or, I believe, twelve days at the utmost) for our stay in Dublin. I am obliged to be at the meeting of Parliament, which will be more early than I expected, and Dick must be in Westminster Hall the first day of term. But I hope and trust,

\* Of Rahasane (or Rasan).

that as we have found our way across the Irish Channel, we shall be able to visit you next year at a more early, and to us a more happy season, when we may have the pleasure, which with great mortification to us we must abandon for the present. It will give your sister and your brother Richard the most real satisfaction, as well as to my son and me, to hear that you are well. We left your brother and sister so at Beaconsfield. Frank Kiernan and Mrs. Kiernan desire most cordially to salute you both. We do so from our hearts. My dearest Julia, you have an unprofitable brother, but one who loves you most truly, as you deserve to be loved, who have, under misfortunes, afflictions, and disappointments, kept up your spirits, your courage, and your inimitable good nature. God will one time or other reward those virtues; I have no doubt of it. My best compliments to Mr. Lemon, and thank him for his protection to you. I write this on a supposition that you are at Loughrea, where if you be, you will salute all there who have been kind to you in my name. God Almighty bless and defend you, and believe me ever, my dearest Sister,

“Most affectionately yours,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“College Green, October 12, 1786.”

“My dear Aunt,

“I find that, by an accident, the letter my father wrote to you, on our arrival here, did not go off for two or three days after, which is certainly the reason we have not heard from you. We both certainly very much regret that we are so near you, without being able to see you. My father has already told you how unpremeditated our expedition was, and how little time was left us to perform it in, by our several occupations in England. However, I am in hope that, now having once undertaken this journey, I may perhaps attempt it again at a more favourable season. I really long to see my cousin. Captain Nagle\* tells me she is so good as to express some regard for me, though I am afraid I have not very much deserved it. The times, however, have not been very favourable, but I hope they will mend. In the mean time let us sometimes hear from you. We are just going to embark again for England in this night's packet. I find, in making up my little accounts here, that I have rather more left than I imagined, viz. 50*l.* which I enclose to you for my cousin, and beg you to make use of it for her as you think fit. I am happy to be able to give her this little testimony of my affection: it is not necessary to mention it in your letters to my father or uncle.

“Believe me, dear Aunt,

“Your affectionate nephew,

“RICHARD BURKE.”

\* The present Sir Edmund Nagle.

Previously to the meeting of Parliament in 1790, the proceedings of the National Assembly of France seeming to rise in the estimation of many persons in this country, drew from Mr. Burke, in private, severe condemnation of the popular feeling; terming it "a gross infatuation," "a tolerance of crime," "an absurd partiality to abstract follies and practical wickedness." Every arrival from France seemed more than to realize his worst anticipations of the evils already perpetrated and impending. When informed of the opinions of Mr. Fox, with whom there had been a material cessation of confidential intercourse for above three years past, being opposed to his own, he expressed some surprise, and on one occasion said, "Fox has too much good nature not to like any thing that promises benefit to his fellow-men, but in this matter, the severities of his judgment must soon correct the venial errors of his disposition." Further information made him less sanguine in this hope respecting his friend, and the fear of open and direct disagreement induced him to resolve not voluntarily to obtrude his sentiments on the question to Parliament,—not at least until compelled so to do by a sense of duty paramount to all private considerations. Such an occasion very soon called him forth.

In two debates on the army estimates (5th and 9th of February, 1790,) Mr. Fox not only eulogized the Revolution in France generally, but was imprudent enough to specify some points of particular admiration—among others the total defection of the French military from their officers and government, which was, in fact, nothing else but connivance at the worst excesses of the populace. Colonel Phipps, as a military man, and other members, reprobated these sentiments loudly as subversive of all discipline and subordination. Mr. Burke, on the second occasion (9th February), expressing the highest admiration for the talents of his Hon. Friend, and the consequent danger to our own country of giving the sanction of his name to such doctrines, entered into an examination of the state of France, the principles, proceedings, and tendencies, of the Revolution; condemning in bitter terms the incurable ignorance of the leaders, their folly, injustice, and wickedness, their pedantic theories, their abuse of elementary principles; and contrasted it very powerfully with the English Revolution; in which, though some were fond of comparing it, he could find not a single point of resemblance. In England, nothing had been changed but what absolute necessity required. In France, on the contrary, nothing whatever, not even the most necessary or praiseworthy institutions, were preserved. He hated the old despotism of France, and still more he hated the new: it was a plundering, ferocious, bloody, tyrannical democracy, without a single virtue to redeem its numerous crimes; and so far from being, as his hon. friend had inadvertently said, worthy of imitation, he would spend his last breath, and the last drop of his blood—he would quit his best



friends, and join his worst enemies, to oppose the least tittle of such a spirit, or such an example, in England.

This speech, which contained no compliment to administration, but on the contrary displayed towards it rather an adverse spirit, was nevertheless received by the members of that body and by a great majority of the House with loud applause. Mr. Pitt was among the most conspicuous; he himself had been incautiously led to express some opinion in favour of the struggle then going on; but, alarmed at its further progress and aspect, he now appeared to wheel round to concur in the sentiments of Mr. Burke. No matter, he said, how they had differed on former points of policy, he felt for him on that occasion the highest gratitude and reverence, and not only the present generation but the latest posterity would revere his name, for the decided part he had that day taken.

The reply of Mr. Fox was mild and conciliatory. He had ever, and did then, entertain the highest veneration for the judgment of his hon. friend; by him he had been instructed more than by all other men and books put together; by him he had been taught to love our constitution; from him he had acquired nearly all his political knowledge; all certainly which was most essential, and which he most valued; "his speech on that day, some arguments and observations excepted, was one of the wisest and most brilliant flights of oratory ever delivered in that House," but, with all these admissions, his opinions on the subject in question continued unshaken.

A rejoinder from Mr. Burke expressed an equally complimentary and conciliatory spirit; and the subject, tender as it evidently was, would have dropped, at least for the present, without further consequences, had not the zeal of Mr. Sheridan, in support of the new opinions,\* urged him on to charge his old political associate as a deserter from his former principles—as an assailant of the basis of freedom itself—as the advocate and apologist of despotism—and the libeller of men struggling in the most glorious of all causes. The reply to these unmeasured censures, which were however mingled with some straggling compliments, was calm, but decided. Such terms, Mr. Burke said, might have been spared, if for nothing more than as a sacrifice to the ghost of departed friendship; they were but a repetition of what was said by the reforming clubs and societies with which the hon. gentleman had lately become entangled, and for whose applause he had chosen to sacrifice his friend; though he might in time find that the value of such praise was not worth the price at which it was

\* Like most other men, he in time, as Burke told him he would, changed his opinion of France and French principles. A memorandum of his says—"I like it no better for coming from France—whence all ills come. Altar of Liberty—begrimed at once with blood and mire."

purchased. Henceforward, he added, they were separated in politics for ever.

This schism threatened such serious consequences to the interests of the party, that attempts were instantly made, and repeated two days afterwards, to heal it by mutual explanation, in presence of the Duke of Portland, Mr. Fox, and others of the chief Members at Burlington House; they met at ten o'clock at night, and debated the matter until three next morning, separating then, as they met, with irreconcilable differences of opinion. The display of talents on both sides is said to have been remarkable. Mr. Burke preserved his temper unruffled, expressing the most amicable sentiments towards the individual, but unfeigned abhorrence of the cause he had advocated; and the impression as to services, powers, and opinions, proved so much in his favour upon the minds of those present, that Mr. Sheridan took offence, and for the remainder of this session, and the beginning of the next, ceased from his usual active support in Parliament.

Some personal dislike prevailed between these distinguished men ever afterwards, nor were they perhaps very cordial for a short time before. Mr. Burke, who always complimented his talents, did not for many reasons place equal confidence in his general conduct or principles; one reason for which was his alleged breach of political faith in intriguing for one of the highest Cabinet situations in the new arrangements consequent on the settling of the Regency, to the exclusion of older and higher claimants. He suspected also, that he was the cause of Mr. Fox withdrawing from him his political confidence; and there were, it is said, some other private sources of disagreement.

The wit, on the other hand, as he rose high in the private favour of an illustrious personage, and in the esteem of his party, felt some impatience of the preponderance of Mr. Burke, for he possessed little of the humility of the latter in the estimate of his own importance. With much less of steady talent or qualifications for office, he had more than his ambition; and forgetful of the disciplined subordination of the old Whig school, aimed at vaulting at once to the head of that connexion, over superior talents and longer services, though without private weight in himself, without any strong hold on public confidence, and, as was generally believed, without the diligence or punctuality necessary to conduct public business. After their disagreement, it was remarked, that he always sat silent in private company, when Mr. Burke was a theme of praise with every one else; in Parliament he spoke of him more than once, "as one for whose talents and personal virtue he entertained the highest esteem, veneration, and regard;" a compliment which did not prevent him from making frequent pointed and personal attacks on the object of it, but which Mr. Burke rarely deigned to regard. To his councils,



also, it has always been said, that the subsequent quarrel of the former with Mr. Fox was owing.

The more zealous friends of Mr. Sheridan, little calculating on the violence of the political storm then in progress in France, and not thinking perhaps that any public question whatever should be permitted to interfere with private connexion, began to tax their ingenuity for the cause of the unexpected disclaimer of him by Burke, and discovered at length that it must be *jealousy* of his talents and influence. Among others, Dr. Parr, though an ardent admirer of Burke, was too staunch a Whig and Foxite to see his former pupil, Sheridan, thus unceremoniously thrown off without administering to the self-love of his friends by assigning some such cause. He wrote thus immediately after the quarrel.—

“It is not merely French politics that produced this dispute;—they might have been settled privately. No, no—there is jealousy lurking underneath—jealousy of Mr. Sheridan’s eloquence;—jealousy of his popularity;—jealousy of his influence with Mr. Fox;—jealousy perhaps of his connexion with the Prince.”

A suggestion of this nature usually comes from an aggrieved party, who either does not admit, or does not find it convenient to acknowledge, any other; it is easily made, and precludes a specific reply. In the present instance the accusation was scarcely plausible. It is true, as has been already said, that Mr. Burke believed he had sufficient reasons for disliking the conduct of Sheridan, particularly since the agitation of the Regency question. But it ought likewise to be stated, that Mr. Fox participated fully in the same feelings; and though they were not so openly exhibited by him in the first instance, and afterwards by the exigencies of politics were sometimes shrouded altogether, they did not the less cease to influence the mind of that statesman, as is well known to his friends, even to the end of his life. Mr. Burke, therefore, if actuated by displeasure towards the wit, did not stand alone in that feeling. The ostensible leader of the party joined him in it. As to jealousy, in the sense here insinuated, it was so wholly improbable, that either as orators or statesmen, in private character or in public estimation, no one who thoroughly understood the distinguishing merits of both, would venture to place them, on such matters, in comparison.

It is ungracious and irksome to dwell upon the failings of the great, more particularly when they are themselves gone to answer the account at the last and greatest tribunal—nor should a breath of this kind go forth against Sheridan here, except for this charge, which when alive he was willing to countenance; and now, when harmless vanity can no longer be gratified by the tale, is imprudently, if not absurdly, repeated.\* If any further ground be re-

\* In his Life, recently published.



quired for the disunion with Burke, let it be sought where perhaps it will be most certainly found, in the totally dissimilar characters of the men. Their minds were cast in a wholly different mould. Their habits of life as diametrically opposite. Nothing but the emergencies of politics could have kept such persons for twelve months together, united by any tie resembling esteem or sincere friendship, when it is considered that one was religious, moral, temperate, principled, benevolent, laborious in public business, active and diligent in his private duties; the other so remarkably deficient in these and other virtues calculated to fix solid esteem,\* that his biographer has scarcely been able to produce a single instance of either. If it be further added, that one was conscientious and punctual in the discharge of his obligations to society, the other reckless to an uncommon degree of the misery and disrepute accruing to himself and others from their constant violation;—that one in the performance of his public functions was unaffected, and, in the estimate of his own importance, commonly unassuming; the other vain and fond of display, sometimes resorting to trick and finesse to increase vulgar admiration of his powers; that one drew upon his purse and his influence on all occasions, to forward the views of unfriended merit, while the other, from his incorrigible negligence, is believed to have disgusted or consigned to obscurity many promising claimants to dramatic literature:—if these and many minor peculiarities be contrasted, there may be found perhaps very ample grounds for jealousy, but proceeding from quite the opposite quarter to that which the preceding passage would insinuate.

Another part of the same letter gives a lively picture of the agitation occasioned by this dispute among the friends of Opposition—

“The ferment and alarm are universal, and something must be done; for it is a conflagration in which they must perish, unless it be stopped. All the papers are with Burke,—even the Foxite papers which I have seen. I know his violence, and temper, and obstinacy of opinion, and—but I will not speak out, *for I think him the greatest man upon the earth.* \* \* \* *He is uncorrupt, I know,* but his passions are quite headstrong.”

In the midst of the first heated discussions occasioned by this rupture at home, Mr. Burke was taken to task for his doctrines on the same subject, from a more distant quarter, by a gentleman with whom, though their acquaintance was not of long standing, he had formed some degree of intimacy.

\* Mr. Burke frequently expressed his disgust at Sheridan's jests in private society against religion. A favourite subject for ridicule with the wit, was the doctrine of the Trinity; which, having become the subject of his ribaldry more than once at the table of Lord Crewe, gave much offence to his lordship and his amiable lady, who from this and other causes found it advisable to decline giving him further invitations to dinner, long before they deemed it expedient to interdict him their house altogether.

Mr. or Captain, Mercer, who in venturing to argue the question only flourished the sword of Harlequin against the armour of Achilles, was a man who, having successfully accomplished the common business of life, that of making money, believed himself also qualified to make, or at least to judge of and to explain, the laws which influence and bind together a great nation. The son of a small trader in the north of Ireland who had little to give him but a common education, he found himself early in life thrown upon his own resources; and, having figured as an under clerk in a counting-house in Dublin and Liverpool, a young sailor in a merchant-ship, and a captain of a West Indiaman, he at length turned his attention to the East Indies. Here, as captain and general merchant, he accumulated in 20 years, without any imputation on his integrity, a fortune of more than 60,000*l.*, with which, and the esteem of those who knew him, among whom was Lord Macartney, at that time Governor of Madras, he returned in 1787, to spend the remainder of his days in ease and honour in his native place of Newry.

He united to a vigorous understanding a mind disposed to the performance of good, and an ardour of character which carried him forward to act with energy, and sturdily to maintain such sentiments as he had formed. He possessed a taste for information; but, like all self-educated men, he had read much rather than well; and having jumbled together the good and the bad without much discrimination, had not found time in his active intercourse with the world to set his mind to work to analyse the mass thus collected, and to detach the gold from the dross. He was, as such persons usually are, opiated; for knowledge, with them, beginning only to flow in at a later period of life than usual, the understanding becomes too rigid and too tenacious of its consequence, easily to part with acquisitions so recently made. His views, on subjects with which he had an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted, were frequently original and just; while on those picked up from chance rather than systematic instruction—from prejudice rather than close inquiry—they were as often common-place and erroneous. The society with which he had chiefly mingled, had not materially tended to correct the original defects under which he laboured. But of his spirit and general cast of mind, a favourable opinion will be formed from the following passage engraved on a plate of gold, hung up originally in the cabin of the ship he commanded in India, and afterwards transferred to the mantelshelf of his parlour in Arno's Vale.

“Hail! Independence; hail! Heav'n's next best gift  
To that of life, and an immortal soul,  
The life of life! that to the banquet high,  
And sober meal, gives taste.”

It would not have been necessary to advert so particularly to

this gentleman, except as he formed a fair specimen of that numerous class of persons who first expressed their astonishment at the opinions of Mr. Burke, and then simultaneously rushed to attack them, though totally disqualified by education, habits of life or talents, to discuss, much less to solve, the abstruse political problems they involved. The following is his first letter on the subject to his illustrious acquaintance; and the reader will be amused, if he can repress his astonishment, at the coolness with which the writer talks of subverting a government,—as if it were an affair of little more consequence than pulling down a cow-shed, and rebuilding it in the newest fashion at the pleasure of the owner—a feeling indeed vulgar and pernicious, but among a certain class of society, too general. It will be observed there is little attempt at reasoning; the communication, however, deserves insertion for the reply it drew forth.

“ Dear Sir,

“ My veneration for your character was great before I had the honour of your personal acquaintance, and it was not diminished when I had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with you. I had long considered you the determined enemy of tyranny and oppression of every kind—the friend of man—and of every thing which might promote his felicity.

“ It was therefore with extreme surprise that I read in my English newspaper of last post, the imputation to you of sentiments exceedingly inimical to what is thought by many a most glorious revolution in France.

“ The newspaper represents you as complaining, that the National Assembly had totally subverted their ancient form of government, and that they had also subverted their church.

“ To complain of the subversion of a government implies a belief of its having been a good one. But I cannot persuade myself to think that such was your opinion of the defunct government of France. Every body has read, more or less, of the late French government; but every one has not been in France as I have been, to see how it operated to the distress and vexation of the people. I saw so much of this, that the word *government* never had a place in my mind when I considered the condition of the French people. In a word, I saw nothing but the most despotic tyranny, the subversion of which would, as I thought, give the greatest pleasure to every sincere lover of civil liberty, of whatever nation he might be.

“ With respect to the subversion of the church, it does not appear that any change in its doctrine has been attempted. In its discipline there may be some alterations, as it is probable the National Assembly will enlarge those exemptions from the jurisdiction of the Court of Rome which it formerly enjoyed, and which were called the privileges of the Gallican Church. For the rest



—if to take from pampered and luxurious prelates a part of those sumptuous livings which were accumulated in the times of ignorance and superstition, and to provide for the more comfortable subsistence of parish priests, be the subversion of a church, millions of good men and good Christians will heartily wish (for the honour of true religion distinct from pageantry and hypocrisy) that all such may in this manner be speedily subverted.

“Suffer a plain independent man to make some further observations.

“Power over our fellow-men, by whatever means it has been acquired—whether by fraud, or force, or thoughtless acquiescence—seems to be considered by its possessor as his dearest birth-right. He would lose his right hand, or even his life, rather than part with a jot or tittle of it. He extends it from object to object until the yoke becomes too heavy and too galling to be longer borne. And by what means are the aggrieved to get rid of it? Not by the most reasonable and eloquent representations—not by the most humble and abject intercessions; for both would be equally scouted and laughed to scorn—not by an appeal to the laws of the country, for the laws were made under the influence of the power complained of, and with a view to its perpetuation. There is, therefore, no remedy to be found but in what is called a revolution; the intention of which being either to curtail, or annul, or place in other hands, the powers which be, it cannot be effected without some convulsion; nor is it possible so to order the matter, but in some cases many individuals may suffer injury and outrage; and this, as far as it goes, is to be lamented. But if it ends in freedom, in the deliverance of a nation from the despotism of one man, *no price can be thought too dear to pay for it.*

“I flatter myself, my dear Sir, that you do not differ essentially from the sentiments expressed in this letter. I am persuaded you feel, and will always acknowledge, that there cannot be a government fit for rational beings to live under and submit to, but where the legislative part of it is chiefly composed of the representatives of the bulk of the people, freely and unbiassedly elected. The new French government promises to be such a one; and notwithstanding what newspapers report to the contrary, I will not take to myself the mortification of supposing that my judgment of points of high and essential importance to the happiness of mankind, differs exceedingly from the opinions of a man celebrated for the clearness of his head, and the philanthropy of his heart.

“Perhaps you will cheer me with an assurance that we do not differ widely; than which nothing would be a more exhilarating cordial to one, who has the honour to be, with every possible respect, your most faithful and humble servant,

“THOMAS MERCER.

“Arno’s Vale, near Newry, Ireland, 19th February, 1790.”

The following was the reply :

TO THOMAS MERCER, ESQ.

“ Dear Sir,

“ The speedy answer I return to your letter, I hope will convince you of the high value I set upon the regard you are so good to express for me, and the obliging trouble which you take to inform my judgment upon matters in which we are all very deeply concerned. I think perfectly well of your heart and your principles, and of the strength of your natural understanding, which, according to your opportunities, you have not been wanting in pains to improve.

“ If you are mistaken, it is perhaps owing to the impression almost inevitably made by the various careless conversations which we are engaged in through life ; conversations in which those who propagate their doctrines have not been called upon for much reflection concerning their end and tendency ; and in which those who imperceptibly imbibe the doctrines taught, are not required, by a particular duty, very closely to examine them, or to act from the impressions they receive. I am obliged to *act*, and am therefore bound to call my principles and sentiments to a strict account. As far as my share of a public trust goes, I am in *trust* religiously to maintain the rights and properties of all descriptions of people in the possession which legally they hold ; and in the *rule* by which alone they can be legally secure in any possession. I do not find myself at liberty either as a man, or as a trustee for men, to take a *vested* property from one man and to give it to another, because I think that the portion of one is too great, and that of another too small. From my first juvenile rudiments of speculative study to the grey hairs of my present experience, I have never learned any thing else. I can never be taught any thing else by *reason* ; and when *force* comes, I shall consider whether I am to submit to it, or how I am to resist it. This I am sure of, that an early guard against the manifest tendency of a contrary doctrine, is the only way by which those who love order can be prepared to resist such force.

“ The calling men by the names of ‘pampered and luxurious prelates,’ &c. is in you no more than a mark of your dislike to intemperance and idle expense ; but in others it is used for other purposes. It is often used to extinguish the sense of justice in our minds, and the natural feelings of humanity in our bosoms. Such language does not mitigate the cruel effects of reducing men of opulent condition, and their innumerable dependents, to the last distress. If I were to adopt the plan of a spoliatory reformation, I should probably employ such language ; but it would aggravate instead of extenuating my guilt in overturning the sacred principles of property.



“Sir, I say that church and state, and human society too, for which church and state were made, are subverted by such doctrines, joined to such practices as leave no foundation for property in *long possessions*. My dear Captain Mercer, it is not my calling the use you make of your plate in your house, either of dwelling or of prayer, ‘pageantry and hypocrisy,’ that can justify me in taking from you your own property, and your own liberty to use your own property according to your own ideas of ornament. When you find me attempting to break into your house to take your plate, under any pretence whatsoever, but most of all under pretence of purity of religion and Christian charity, shoot me for a robber and an hypocrite, as in that case I shall certainly be. The ‘true Christian religion’ never taught me any such practices; nor did the religion of my nature, nor any religion, nor any law.

“Let those who never abstained from a full meal, and as much wine as they could swallow, for a single day of their whole lives, satirize ‘luxurious and pampered prelates’ if they will. Let them abuse such prelates, and such lords, and such squires, provided it be only to correct their vices. I care not much about the language of this moral satire, if they go no further than satire. But there are occasions when the language of Falstaff reproaching the Londoners, whom he robbed in their way to Canterbury, with their gorbellies and their city luxury, is not so becoming.

“It is not by calling the landed estates, possessed by old *prescriptive rights*, the ‘accumulations of ignorance and superstition,’ that can support me in shaking that grand title, which supersedes all other title, and which all my studies of general jurisprudence have taught me to consider as one principal cause of the formation of states; I mean the ascertaining and securing *prescription*. But these are donations made in ‘ages of ignorance and superstition.’ Be it so. It proves that these donations were made long ago; and this is *prescription*; and this gives right and title.\*

“It is possible that many estates about you were originally obtained by arms, that is, by violence, a thing almost as bad as superstition, and not much short of ignorance; but it is *old violence*; and that which might be wrong in the beginning, is

\* The writer of Junius’s Letters, in one of his private communications to Wilkes (18th September, 1771), has a passage so similar in spirit to this as to deserve notice; it is in defence of close boroughs.—“You ask me from whence did the right (of parliamentary representation in small places) originate, and for what purpose was it granted? I do not see the tendency of these questions, but I answer them without scruple: ‘In general it arose from the King’s writs, and it was granted with a view to balance the powers of the nobility, and to obtain aids from the people.’ But without looking back to an obscure antiquity from which no certain information can be collected, you will find that the laws of England have much greater regard to *possession* (of a certain length) *than to any other title whatsoever*; and that in every kind of property which savours of the *reality*, this doctrine is most wisely the basis of our *English jurisprudence*.”



consecrated by time, and becomes lawful. This may be superstition in me, and ignorance; but I had rather remain in ignorance and superstition, than be enlightened and purified out of the first principles of law and natural justice.

*Ed. Burke  
I mean  
it.*

“I never will suffer you, if I can help it, to be deprived of the well-earned fruits of your industry, because others may want your fortune more than you do, and may have laboured, and do now labour in vain, to acquire even a subsistence. Nor, on the contrary, if success had less smiled on your endeavours, and you had come home insolvent, would I take from any ‘pampered and luxurious lord’ in your neighbourhood one acre of his land, or one spoon from his side-board, to compensate your losses, though incurred (as they would have been incurred) in the course of a well-spent, virtuous, and industrious life. God is the distributor of his own blessings. I will not impiously attempt to usurp his throne, but will keep according to the subordinate place and trust in which he has stationed me, to secure the order of property which I find established in my country. No guiltless man has ever been, nor ever will, I trust, be able to say with truth, that he has been obliged to retrench a dish at his table for any reformatations of mine.

“You pay me the compliment to suppose me a foe to tyranny and oppression, and you are, therefore, surprised at the sentiments I have lately delivered in Parliament. I am that determined foe to tyranny, or I greatly deceive myself in my character; and I am sure I am an idiot in my conduct. It is because I am, and mean to continue so, that I abominate the example of France for this country. I know that tyranny seldom attacks the poor, never in the first instance. They are not its proper prey. It falls on the wealthy and the great, whom by rendering objects of envy, and otherwise obnoxious to the multitude, they may more easily destroy; and when they are destroyed, that multitude which was led to that ill-work by the arts of bad men, is itself undone for ever.

“I hate tyranny, at least I think so; but I hate it most of all where most are concerned in it. The tyranny of a multitude is a multiplied tyranny. If, as society is constituted in these large countries of France and England, full of unequal property, I must make my choice (which God avert!) between the despotism of a single person or of the many, my election is made. As much injustice and tyranny has been practised in a few months by a French democracy, as in all the arbitrary monarchies in Europe in the forty years of my observation. I speak of public glaring acts of tyranny; I say nothing of the common effects of old abusive governments, because I do not know that as bad may not be found in the new.

“This democracy begins very ill; and I feel no security, that what has been rapacious and bloody at its commencement, will

be mild and protecting in its final settlement. They cannot, indeed, in future rob so much, because they have left little that can be taken. I go to the full length of my principle. I should think the government of the deposed King of France, or of the late King of Prussia, or the present Emperor, or the present Czarina, none of them perhaps perfectly good people, to be far better than the government of twenty-four millions of men, *all as good as you*, and I do not know any body better; supposing that those twenty-four millions would be subject, as infallibly they would, to the same unrestrained, though virtuous impulses; because it is plain that their majority would think every thing justified by their warm good intentions—they would heat one another by their common zeal—counsel and advice would be lost upon them—they would not listen to temperate individuals, and they would be less capable, infinitely, of moderation than the most heady of those princes.

“What have I to do with France, but as the common interest of humanity, and its example to this country, engages me? I know France, by observation and inquiry, pretty tolerably for a stranger; and I am not a man to fall in love with the faults or follies of the old or new government. You reason as if I were running a parallel between its former abusive government and the present tyranny. What had all this to do with the opinions I delivered in Parliament, which ran a parallel between *the liberty they might have had* and *this frantic delusion*. This is the way by which you blind and deceive yourself, and beat the air in your argument with me. Why do you instruct me on a state of the case which has no existence? You know how to reason very well. What most of the newspapers make me say, I know not, nor do I much care. I do not think, however, they have thus stated me. There is a very fair *abstract* of my speech\* printed in a little pamphlet, which I would send you if it were worth putting you to the expense.

“To discuss the affairs of France and its revolution would require a volume, perhaps many volumes. Your general reflections about revolutions may be right or wrong; they conclude nothing. I do not find myself disposed to controvert them, for I do not think they apply to the present affairs, nay I am sure they do not. I conceive you have got very imperfect accounts of these transactions. I believe I am much more exactly informed of them.

“I am sorry, indeed, to find that our opinions do differ essentially, fundamentally, and are at the utmost possible distance from each other, if I understand you or myself clearly on this subject. Your freedom is far from displeasing to me; I love it; for I always wish to know the full of what is in the mind of the friend I con-

\* This was by his own authority, and has now a place in his Works.

verse with. I give you mine as freely; and I hope I shall offend you as little as you do me.

“I shall have no objection to your showing my letter to as many as you please. I have no secrets with regard to the public. I have never shrunk from obloquy; and I have never courted popular applause. If I have met with any share of it, *‘non recepi sed rapui.’* No difference of opinion, however, shall hinder me from cultivating your friendship, while you permit me to do so. I have not written this to discuss these matters in a prolonged controversy (I wish we may never say more about them), but to comply with your commands, which ever shall have due weight with me.

“I am most respectfully,

“And most affectionately yours,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“London, Feb. 26, 1790.”

His correspondent, however, possessed too much pugnacity, or too good an opinion of himself, to submit to be written down by any pen, however celebrated; and therefore, instead of attending to the wish expressed in the latter part of the preceding letter, he drew up a rejoinder in support of his opinions, which is much too long for insertion here. It abounds, as may be supposed, in the fundamental errors and common-place arguments of superficial readers and thinkers. He lays claim indeed to be “not a total stranger to the subject,” “not a careless or inattentive observer,” as had been insinuated; and further goes on to say, that a knowledge of such matters is “attainable by almost every understanding.” In proof, no doubt, of the latter assertion, he boldly attempts to maintain, that the offices and revenues of the church may be carved out, fashioned, and appropriated at any time and all times, entirely at the pleasure of the state; that the whole of its income and property belong of right to the civil power as the original owner; that vested rights and legal possession do not apply to them in the same manner as to private property; that the seizure of the whole by the state would be “no infringement on the principles of reason, or justice, or equity;” and that the union of church and state “are, (‘I beg,’ says the writer, with a passing dash of modesty, ‘you will bear with my great freedom’) little else than an alliance, or to speak more properly, a combination, between superstition and tyranny.” The conduct of monarchs, he contends, “is no more sacred by prescription than the property of the church;” “the respected word *Government* ought not to be applied to such diabolical conspiracies against the improvement, protection, and happiness of mankind,” “as the Russian and Prussian schemes of domination” (meaning their governments); and as an appropriate finish to this effusion of liberal



sentiments and patriotic wisdom and moderation, thinks the French nation were right in not repairing or amending the old national institutions; "they attempted an entirely new form of government, and I most sincerely wish they will be able to *perfect a model constitution for all nations.*"

Harmless as such absurdities as these would have been at any other time, Mr. Burke saw some cause for disquiet now, when he found them reiterated from innumerable quarters by many honest and well meaning men, several of them, as in this instance, his personal friends—by men of some weight from their property, and some reputation for sense and cleverness from their success in life, but all very injudicious and mistaken politicians. Unimportant therefore as this correspondence was in other respects, it confirmed him in the design to endeavour to undeceive such men, by examining the subject in detail, in a work expressly fitted for the public eye. There is no doubt also, that the remarks of this correspondent on ecclesiastical matters, gave birth, or at least greater length, to the defence contained in that work of church establishments.

The next avowed difference of opinion of Mr. Burke with Opposition, was on the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, moved by Mr. Fox on the 2nd of March; but it seemed rather an opposition as to times and circumstances, than from principle; and in the course of it he warmly defended his right honourable friend, the mover, from insinuations thrown out against his enterprising character, in case of coming into power, by Mr. Pitt. 'He was surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should think ill of a friend of the dissenters,—more especially when it was remembered that a former minister of this country—a man of brilliant talents and acknowledged abilities—who had directed the government with great glory to its national character, and great safety to the constitution in church and state—a man whom he believed the right honourable gentleman would not think lightly of—he meant the Earl of Chatham—had been considered an especial protector of the dissenters. That Noble Lord had gone so far as to tell the House of Peers, in reply to an accusation of Dr. Drummond, Archbishop of York, of the pastors of the dissenters being "men of close ambition." "They are so, my Lords; and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals; to the doctrine of inspired apostles, not to the degrees of interested and aspiring bishops. They contend for a spiritual creed and spiritual worship. We have a Calvinistic creed, a popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy." Thus his lordship selected the worst names of other religions to apply to our church and liturgy.

'Had the present question, he continued, been brought on ten years sooner, he himself would have felt bound to vote in the affirmative; but such doubts had since arisen in his mind, that

when the same thing was moved in 1787 and 1789 (by Mr. Beaufoy), extremely unwilling to vote against it, yet not satisfied that he was right in voting for it, he had quitted the House without voting at all. At the present moment, he thought the repeal more particularly inexpedient—there was a wild spirit of innovation abroad, which required not indulgence but restraint—for the avowed leaders of the dissenters, alluding to Drs. Price, Priestley, Kippis, Towers, and others, had, in their speeches, writings, resolutions, and even catechisms and sermons, given countenance not merely to the worst portion of the political spirit of the day, but some of them had openly threatened a direct attack upon the church establishment.

‘Such, he firmly believed, was not the intention of the respectable body with which those persons were connected; he had ever entertained for that body the highest respect and esteem, and among its members were some of his best friends; but while they permitted such persons to take the lead in their affairs, they became in the general opinion, and in fact, responsible in some degree for, and identified with, such sentiments. After all, as some test would probably be required by the country if these acts were repealed, he had brought the draught of one in his pocket:—the present he had always thought a bad and insufficient test for the end it was meant to accomplish; it was a great abuse of the sacramental rite—a rite infinitely too sacred and too solemn to be prostituted, as it often was, for very trivial purposes.’—Whatever was the cause—whether from the effect of this speech, which embraced many details of the hostile spirit of dissenters to the church, or the exertions of Mr. Pitt, or the general alarm in the country, this question, that in the preceding session received a faint negative from no more than 20, was now smothered by a majority of 189.

In the general abuse, which, whether right or wrong and at all hazards, the favourers of French politics thought it their duty soon afterwards to pour upon Mr. Burke, many pages were written to prove him guilty of gross inconsistency in thus opposing a measure which he had formerly supported with all his powers. It is likewise remarkable, that nearly as many pages were employed to defend him from this charge on the ground that the dissenters of 1790 being busy meddling politicians, whose aim was the possession of political power rather than religious freedom, he was justified in denying to them what he had wished to concede to the conscientious body who solicited his support in 1772.

This attack, like many others made upon him, arose from misinformation; and the defence, therefore, though well-meant, was unnecessary. He did *not* advocate the repeal of the test act in 1772, for the simple reason that no such repeal was proposed. The facts of the matter were these:—At the period in question



the dissenting ministers applied for an enlargement of the toleration act, or for a repeal of the clause which required subscription to the articles as a condition of enjoying the benefits of that act. This claim—and this alone—he supported; as he continued to do in 1773, and again in 1779, when it was conceded; but at neither of these periods was there an application made for the repeal of the test act.

The other chief measures in which he took part, were in voting an increase of income to the Speaker of the House of Commons, paying, in the course of his speech several compliments to Mr. Addington, who then filled the chair, for his “impartiality, attention, and diligence, which had not only answered the expectations of his own friends, but satisfied the House in general;” on the claim of the Duke of Athol for certain rights in the Isle of Man, which he stigmatized as a job, and which, from the sense of the House appearing against it, was put off; on the quarrel with Spain respecting Nootka Sound, his opinion being strongly in favour of accommodation, for that “as we never ought to go to war for a profitable wrong, so we ought never to go to war for an unprofitable right; and therefore he hoped that the intended armament would be considered not as a measure calculated to terminate the war happily, but to enable Ministers to carry on the negociation vigorously;” on a censure passed on Major Scott for a libel on the House; and on two resolutions of the managers of the impeachment moved by himself, which were to persevere in the trial generally; while, for the sake of expedition in deciding it, they were to select only the more important charges for adjudication.

In addition to these exertions, he opposed a motion by Mr. Flood, for parliamentary reform, which produced a very candid confession from Mr. Fox, that though *he* thought such a measure advisable, the country at large did not seem to be of the same opinion. A jest of Burke on this question, widely disseminated in private society, threw much ridicule upon the enthusiasts in this cause. A new party of Reformers, he said, had arisen still more pure in their creed than the rest, who deemed annual parliaments not sufficiently frequent, and quoted, in support of their doctrine, the latter words of the Statute of Edward III., that “a parliament shall be holden every year once, and *more often if need be.*” How to designate these gentlemen from their less orthodox associates he knew not, except indeed their tenets furnished the hint, and they be known as the *Oftener-if-need-be’s!*

A proposition, through the medium of some common friends, was made to Mr. Burke about this period, by his former acquaintance Gerard Hamilton, to renew that intimacy which had so long suffered estrangement, but this offer he declined. He had told Mr. Flood at the time, there was “an eternal separation” between



them,—that “he would not keep a memorial of such a person about him,” and possibly the recollection of some random sarcasms, which Hamilton, though he always did full justice to his uncommon powers, had occasionally let off against his party and himself, might have tended to make him keep his word. The reply made to the communication was, that without entertaining the slightest resentful or unfriendly feeling toward Mr. Hamilton, there were several circumstances in their connexion and separation, and long subsequent alienation, which would prevent his enjoying the same pleasure as formerly in his society, and therefore a renewal of intimacy might not be very satisfactory to either. It is said, that had Lord Temple ever become Minister, it was his intention to make Mr. Hamilton his Chancellor of the Exchequer: and it must ever be considered an enigma, that any one looking forward to such a post, should not have made himself of more importance in Parliament than he did, by frequently speaking. No explanation has ever been given of his taciturnity, except the illiberal one be surmised, that he already enjoyed in a rich sinecure all the substantial return he could expect for much talking.

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## CHAPTER XI.

Publication of Reflections on the Revolution in France.—Testimonies in its favour.—Reply of Burke to the Universities of Dublin and Oxford, and to Mr. Cumberland.—Thomas Paine.—Character of Henry IV. of France.—Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.—Rupture with Mr. Fox.—Jury Bill of 1791.—Parliamentary business.—Anecdotes.

FROM the moment of the rupture with Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Burke, perceiving that his opinions on the French Revolution were very generally misunderstood or misrepresented, and willing also to state them more fully and forcibly to the world than even parliamentary speaking would allow, as well as to enable the reflecting part of mankind to think more justly, as he believed, of the event itself, decided to call in the aid of the press.

This task was begun and carried on during the summer with his wonted ardour and disregard of labour, and, alluding to the anxious emotions to which it gave rise, he says, in a letter to Lord Charlemont, of the 25th May, “I have been at once much occupied and much agitated with my employment.” The elements of the work, however, had been for some months floating in his mind, and in fact no inconsiderable portion of it, or at least matter nearly similar, were already in various forms committed to paper. These were collected, re-written, enlarged, amended, and re-modelled to the form in which he had determined to publish—that of a letter to the French gentleman who had before consulted him on the

subject. The whole was polished with extraordinary care, more than a dozen of proofs being worked off and destroyed according to Dodsley's account, before he could please himself; it was set off with every attraction of the highest style of eloquence of which the English language is susceptible, and the most vivid and striking imagery in the whole compass of English prose; it was impressed on the judgment by acute reasoning, by great penetration into the motives of human action, by maxims of the most sound and practical wisdom; by expositions of the impracticable nature of the new government, and the evil designs of its framers; nothing, indeed, which his genius, his knowledge, or his observation could supply, was omitted to give popularity to the "Reflections on the Revolution in France."

In the beginning of November, 1790, this celebrated work made its appearance, and a French translation, by his friend M. Dupont, an advocate formerly in Paris, quickly spread its reputation over all Europe. The publication proved one of the remarkable events of the year, perhaps of the century; for it may be doubted whether any previous political production ever excited so much attention, so much discussion, so much praise from one party, so much animadversion from another, but ultimately, among the great majority of persons, such general conviction of the correctness of his views, as to have fully succeeded in turning the stream of public opinion to the direction he wished, from the channel in which it had hitherto flowed. The circulation of the book corresponded with its fame; within the first year about 19,000 copies were sold in England, and about 13,000 in France; the whole number sold of English copies is estimated at more than 30,000—and this at a time when there was not a third of the demand for books of any kind that there is at present;—and some experienced booksellers have said that the sale was greater than any preceding book whatever of the same price. The interest which it excited did not cease with the moment, for it was sought after then and since by persons little prone to political discussion, for the wisdom of the lessons it taught; by many for its literary beauties; by many in order to retrace the outline of fearful and extraordinary events there in great measure foretold; and it will ever be a source of deep interest to the practical statesman, and of unfeigned admiration to the man of taste and genius.

A laboured analysis of this or any other of the more celebrated writings of this eloquent man, is not intended here, rather perhaps from want of inclination in the writer than from want of materials, which would add more certainly to the size of the present work than perhaps to the edification of the reader. In the instance before us it is particularly unnecessary. Almost every man who pretends to read at all, has read it. To him who has, such a disquisition would be at best meagre and unsatisfactory. To him who has not, it would impart no means of justly appreciating the



force and beauty of the original ; for of Burke it has been said, as Johnson remarked of Shakspeare, that to attempt to recommend him by select extracts would be but to follow the example of the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen. Many of the passages in it form matter of continual quotation for their eloquence ; and few of its pages but contain something profound in remark, novel in thought, and ingenious and beautiful in illustration. The peroration, though in general but little noticed, is not the least striking passage ; nor will the prophetic remark on the vicissitudes likely to be experienced in the forms of the new government, be lightly passed over by the reader.

“ I have told you candidly,” he says to his correspondent, “ my sentiments. I think they are not likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought. You are young ; you cannot guide, but must follow the fortune of your country. But hereafter they may be of some use to you, *in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly remain ; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, ‘ through great varieties of untried being,’ and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood.*

“ I have little to recommend my opinions but long observation and much impartiality. They come from one who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness ; and who in his last acts does not wish to belie the tenour of his life. They come from one almost the whole of whose public exertion has been a struggle for the liberty of others ; from one in whose breast no anger durable or vehement has ever been kindled, but by what he considered as tyranny ; and who snatches from his share in the endeavours which are used by good men to discredit opulent oppression,\* the hours he has employed on your affairs ; and who in so doing persuades himself he has not departed from his usual office : they come from one who desires honours, distinctions, and emoluments, but little ; and who expects them not at all ; who has no contempt for fame, and no fear of obloquy ; who shuns contention though he will hazard an opinion : from one who wishes to preserve consistency ; but who would preserve consistency by varying his means to secure the unity of his end ; and when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise.” †

The testimonies of approval which flowed in upon the writer from every quarter soon after the appearance of his book, evinced

\* In allusion to the prosecution of Mr. Hastings.

† To preserve the euphony of the last sentence, the completeness of the nautical metaphor, and to save the repetition of the word *equipoise* which exists in the same sentence, a sailor would have finished it thus,—“ which may preserve it upon an even keel.”



not merely the admiration of his eloquence and literary talents ; but his power over the question in discussion : no writer probably was ever before so complimented.

The Sovereigns subsequently assembled at Pilnitz, particularly the Emperor of Germany, transmitted to him through one of his Ministers, with whom Mr. Burke had some future correspondence, a tribute of decided approbation. The French Princes did the same through his son and Mons. Cazales. Catherine of Russia directed her Ambassador, Count de Woronzow, to communicate in her name sentiments of a similar nature. His late Majesty, George III., not only gave the work an attentive perusal, but had a number of copies elegantly bound, which he distributed among his friends with the remark, that it was "a book which every gentleman ought to read." Stanislaus, the unfortunate King of Poland, to whom Mr. Burke was personally known, sent him his likeness on a gold medal, with a letter written in English, deeming that language, as he said, the most copious and energetic to convey the high sense which he entertained of his patriotism and talents.

The reply of the orator stated in expressive terms that so high a mark of esteem might be supposed to awaken his vanity, but it tended rather to excite his veneration and esteem for the character of a Prince whom he had long admired. He possessed, he said, no cabinet of medals, but had he the richest in the universe, he was persuaded he would be at a loss in what illustrious series to place that of his Majesty :—it must be placed the first of a new one :—he had a son, and happy would it be for that son if he lived to be able to add a second to it. He praised the revolution in Poland, the origin and progress of which he ascribed to the King ; "you," said he, "that may be truly called the father, and not the proprietor of your people."

The praises of the learned, however, preceded, in the order of time, the approval of the great. The first tribute of this kind which he received from a public body, came very appropriately, as the nurse of his genius, from Trinity College, Dublin. In December 1790, on a motion of the Provost (the head of the University) the honorary degree of LL.D. was unanimously conferred upon him in full convocation, and an address afterwards presented in a gold box, to express their sense of his services—"as the powerful advocate of the constitution, the friend of public order, virtue, and the happiness of mankind ; and in testimony of the high respect entertained by the University for the various endowments of his capacious mind, and for his superior talents and abilities." The following was his reply, addressed to the Provost.

"My dear Sir,

"I find it difficult indeed to make a proper acknowledgment to you for the very flattering mark I received of your continued friend-

ship and partiality to me in your letter of the 13th of this month. This proof of your private friendship is as valuable to me as the public distinction which I owe to your motion, and which comes through your hands, though you will believe that I feel the approbation of the University as one of the greatest honours which could be conferred upon me. The University is indeed highly generous in accepting with so much indulgence the produce of its own gifts. I am infinitely happy that that learned body has been pleased to recognize in the piece it condescends to favour, the unaltered subsistence of those principles of liberty and morality along with some faint remains of that taste of composition, which are infused and have always been infused together, into the minds of those who have the happiness to be instructed by it.

“ I received this most honourable testimony of your approbation just as I was going to the House of Commons yesterday to recommence my tenth year’s warfare against the most dangerous enemy to the justice, honour, laws, morals, and constitution of this country by which they have ever been attacked : I mean the corruption which has come upon us from the East, and in which I act with every thing respectable in every party in the House. Though I had been for some days ill in health, and not very full of spirits, your letter enabled me to go through a long and fatiguing day, if not with strength, at least with resolution. I thought that the university which had bred me, called upon me, not to disgrace in my last stage, the lessons she had taught me in the early period of my life ; and I hope, old as I am, I shall prove as docile to her lessons as when I was subject to her discipline.

“ Excuse my not saying all that my heart would dictate on this occasion to you and the gentlemen of the university ; but the consequences of a late day disable, and I hope will excuse me. But believe me, when I assure you that I am ever, with the most perfect respect and affection,

“ My dear Sir,

“ Your most obliged and faithful humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Duke Street, St. James’s,  
“ Dec. 18, 1790.”

An address from the resident graduates of Oxford was about the same time, presented to him through Mr. Windham,\* which spoke

\* To the Right Honourable Edmund Burke.

“ We whose names are hereunto subscribed, resident graduates in the University of Oxford, request you to accept this respectful declaration of our sentiments, as a tribute which we are desirous of paying to splendid talents employed in the advancement of public good. We think it fit and becoming the friends of our church and state to avow openly their obligations to those who distinguish themselves in the support of our approved establishments ; and we judge it to be our especial duty to do this in seasons peculiarly marked by a spirit of rash and dangerous innovation.

“ As members of an university whose institutions embrace every useful and orna-

the sentiments of nearly the whole of the university, though a temporary cabal or misunderstanding among the heads of houses, prevented the diploma degree of LL.D. being conferred upon a writer whose philosophical essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, forms a book of reference connected with the education of youth in their establishment, and whose eloquence in this instance tended to preserve and honour that establishment itself. The reply to Mr. Windham was as follows :—

“ My dear Sir,

“ The valuable present I received from the resident graduates in the University of Oxford, becomes doubly acceptable in passing through your hands. Gentlemen so eminent for science, erudition, and virtue, and who possess the uncommon art of doing kind things in the kindest manner, would naturally choose a person qualified like themselves to convey their favours and distinctions to those whom they are inclined to honour. Be pleased to assure those learned gentlemen that I am beyond measure happy in finding my well-meant endeavours well received by them; and I think my satisfaction does not arise from motives merely selfish, because their declared approbation must be of the greatest importance in giving an effect (which, without that sanction, might well be wanting) to an humble attempt in favour of the cause of freedom, virtue, and order, united.

“ This cause it is our common wish and our common interest to maintain; and it can hardly be maintained without securing on a solid foundation, and preserving in an uncorrupted purity, the noble establishments which the wisdom of our ancestors has formed for giving permanency to those blessings which they have left to us as our best inheritance.

“ We have all a concern in maintaining them all; but if all those who are more particularly engaged in some of those establishments, and who have a peculiar trust in maintaining them, were wholly to decline all marks of their concurrence in opinion, it might give occasion to malicious people to suggest doubts, whether the representation I had given was really expressive of the sentiments of the people on those subjects. I am obliged to those gentlemen for having removed the ground of those doubts.

“ I have the honour to be,” &c. &c. &c.

“ EDMUND BURKE.”

mental part of learning, we should esteem ourselves justified in making this address, if we had only to offer you our thanks for the valuable accession which the stock of our national literature has received by the publication of your important ‘Reflections.’ But we have higher objects of consideration, and nobler motives to gratitude: we are persuaded that we consult the real and permanent interests of this place, when we acknowledge the eminent service rendered both to our civil and religious constitution by your able and disinterested vindication of their true principles; and we obey the yet more sacred obligation to promote the cause of religion and morality, when we give this proof that we honour the advocate by whom they are so eloquently and effectually defended.”



The Archbishop of Aix, and others of the dignified clergy of France, wrote several letters to him expressive of their obligations and acknowledgments "that the first orator of England had become their defender." Nearly all the superior members of our own church, the great body of the nobility, the most eminent statesmen with a few exceptions, and several of the chief men of letters, pronounced him the saviour, not merely of the English, but of all established governments.

One of those who from his heart, principles, and taste, he thought best qualified to form an opinion, was Sir Joshua Reynolds; to him therefore the work was submitted in manuscript, and it received his unqualified approval. Gibbon proved particularly warm in his applause. "I thirst," said he, a short time before he saw the volume, "for Mr. Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France." After perusing it, he wrote on two occasions—"Burke's book is a most admirable medicine against the French disease. I admire his eloquence; I approve his politics; I adore his chivalry; and I can almost forgive his reverence for church establishments;" showing in the last clause of this sentence what inconsistency a prejudice may cause a learned and acute man to commit, as if he seemed unconscious that not to uphold the church would be to relinquish one of the strongest arguments for the stability of the state.

"I conceive," writes Cumberland, who, though seldom given to eulogize a brother author, was on this occasion surprised into an express letter of congratulation the first week after the publication, a proof at least of his critical judgment—"there is not to be found in all the writings of my day, perhaps I may say not in the English language, so brilliant a cluster of fine and beautiful passages as we are presented with in Edmund Burke's inimitable tract on the French Revolution. It is most highly coloured and most richly ornamented, but there is elegance in its splendour, and dignity in its magnificence. The orator demands attention in a loud and lofty tone, but his voice never loses its melody, nor his periods their sweetness. When he has roused us with the thunder of his eloquence, he can at once, Timotheus-like, choose a melancholy theme, and melt us into pity: there is grace in his anger; for he can inveigh without vulgarity; he can modulate the strongest burst of passion, for even in his madness there is music."

To the letter from this gentleman the following was the reply:—

"Beaconsfield, November 13, 1790.

"Dear Sir,

"I was yesterday honoured with your most obliging letter. You may be assured that nothing could be more flattering to me than the approbation of a gentleman so distinguished in literature as you are, and in so great a variety of its branches. It is an

earnest to me of that degree of toleration in the public judgment, which may give my reasonings some chance of being useful. I know however that I am indebted to your politeness and your good nature as much as to your opinion, for the indulgent manner in which you have been pleased to receive my endeavour.

“Whether I have described our countrymen properly, time is to show: I hope I have, but at any rate it is perhaps the best way to persuade them to be right by supposing that they are so. Great bodies like great men must be instructed in the way in which they will be best pleased to receive instruction; flattery itself may be converted into a mode of counsel; *laudando admonere* has not always been the most unsuccessful method of advice. In this case moral policy requires it, for when you must expose the practices of some kinds of men, you do nothing if you do not distinguish them from others.

“Accept once more my best acknowledgments for the very handsome manner in which you have been pleased to consider my pamphlet, and do me the justice to believe me, with the most perfect respect,

“Dear Sir,

“Your most faithful and obliged humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.”

Several eulogies as strong as that of Cumberland might be transcribed, but one delivered soon afterward by a professed political opponent, the late Lord (then Mr.) Erskine, is too just and characteristic to be omitted.

“I shall take care to put Mr. Burke’s work on the French Revolution, into the hands of those whose principles are left to my formation. I shall take care that they have the advantage of doing, in the regular progression of youthful studies, what I have done even in the short intervals of laborious life; that they shall transcribe, with their own hands, from all the works of this most extraordinary person, and from the last among the rest, the soundest truths of religion; the justest principles of morals, inculcated and rendered delightful by the most sublime eloquence; the highest reach of philosophy, brought down to the level of common minds, by the most captivating taste; the most enlightened observations on history, and the most copious collection of useful maxims from the experience of common life; and separate for themselves the good from the bad.”

Another writer\* who himself possesses no inconsiderable claims to eloquence, speaks of the execution of the work in nearly a similar style. But its doctrines were as little to his taste as to that of the great advocate just mentioned, for both being infected by the political epidemic of the day, and deluded by the prevail-

\* The Rev. Robert Hall, a dissenting minister of Leicester—“Apology for the Freedom of the Press.”

ing revolutionary nomenclature of original rights—nature—perfectibility—a jargon dignified with the name of reason, prostrated their intellect to the worship of this wooden idol which they would fain have exalted into a deity.

“It is pretended that the moment we quit a state of *nature*, as we have given up the control of our own actions in return for the superior advantages of law and government, we can never appeal again to any original principles, but must rest content with the advantages that are secured by the terms of the society.

“These are the views which distinguish the political writings of Mr. Burke, an author whose splendid and unequalled powers have given vogue and fashion to certain tenets, which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible. In the field of reason the encounter would not be difficult,\* but who can withstand the fascination and magic of his eloquence? The excursions of his genius are immense! His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation, and every walk of art. His eulogium on the Queen of France is a master-piece of pathetic composition; so select are its images, so fraught with tenderness, and so rich with colours ‘dipt in heaven,’ that he who can read it without rapture may have merit as a reasoner, but must resign all pretensions to taste and sensibility. His imagination is in truth only too prolific: a world of itself, where he dwells in the midst of chimerical alarms, is the dupe of his own enchantments, and starts, like Prospero, at the spectres of his own creation.”

Dr. Beattie, who, as far as opinions went, had always hitherto been opposed to him in politics, but who knew the soundness of his principles when any real danger threatened the state, thus writes, April 25, 1790, six months before the publication.—“I wish Mr. Burke would publish what he intended on the present state of France. He is a man of principle, and a friend to religion, to law, and to monarchy, as well as to liberty.”

One of the suspected authors of Junius’s Letters (Hugh Boyd) in allusion to this production of his old acquaintance, and the event it was meant to reprobate, thus writes:—

“But to turn to the more pleasing view, where the finest talents combat on the side of truth. We have seen their triumph in the noblest cause; in the cause of religion, law, and order; in defence of every sacred post and barrier, essential not alone to the security and happiness of mankind, but to the very existence of society. The sublime comprehension of that penetrating genius (Mr. Burke) which in the early dawn of democracy saw the destructive principle of general conflagration that was to flame in

\* Easy as the matter seems to this writer, no opponent has ventured into this “field of reason,” without receiving a signal overthrow; for there is little or nothing in Mr. Burke’s doctrines with which a constitutional inquirer of steady patriotism and moderate views can find substantial fault.



its meridian, gave the alarm to the world; and his warning voice was heard. The baleful influence, threatening every confine of humanity, was averted; and the portentous meteor, consumed in its own fires, passes away for ever."

On the other hand, this book was reprobated as assailing the very foundations of liberty, by a party bold, numerous, and able, at the head of which, or at least countenancing it, stood Mr. Fox. His censures were not merely unreserved, but delivered, as he himself avowed, in all companies, public and private, whenever it became a subject of discussion. Some months afterwards he termed it in the House of Commons, with more of pique, or less of judgment, than could be expected from such a man, "a libel on all free governments," and, "he disliked it as much as any of Mr. Paine's;" remarks not very delicate or conciliatory as applied to the productions of a friend, and the latter certainly displaying a peculiar political taste; but both almost verifying a remark of Burke at a future period, that "the French Revolution had not merely shaken all the thrones of Europe, but shaken his friend Fox's heart and understanding out of their right places."

This party besides embraced many other Members of Opposition, his followers, some philosophers, the great body of second-rate literary men, some clergymen, many lawyers, many dissenting ministers, and nine-tenths of the profession of physic—all therefore belonging to the educated classes, but the great majority without claim to any practical acquaintance with politics; men deep in speculation, and in books, but wholly ignorant of the workings of governments; who knew nothing of human nature in great and untried emergencies, such as the state of France then exhibited; who mistook warm feelings and prejudices for sound principles; some who, with good intentions toward mankind, would have committed the grossest errors in reducing them to practice; and many whose views upon the constitution of the country were more than questionable.

By this body Mr. Burke and his *Work* \* were assailed with a degree of animosity unprecedented in the political warfare even of England, and so perseveringly continued to the present day by the shattered remnants of the same order of politicians, that among the half-read classes of society who seldom like the

\* A celebrated phrase, contained in this book, was bruited about in every form of speech and writing, in order to excite the popular indignation. In speaking of the destruction of the nobility and clergy, he said, that along with these, its natural protectors, learning would be "trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude." The expression, though plainly figurative, was tortured to mean that he actually thought the people no better than swine, yet all other impassioned writers have dealt in the same license of language without reproach, or even remark; among which the reader will immediately recollect "the common dung o' the soil," and many others as strong, applied to the mass of mankind. Even Republican Milton uses the words "herd confused," "miscellaneous rabble," applied to the multitude, so little respect was there in the mind of that sturdy opponent of monarchy for the "majesty of the people."

labour of inquiring or thinking for themselves, there is a kind of common agreement to censure his conduct and doctrines without knowing what they really were or to what they tended. No pains indeed were spared to produce this effect. Every epithet of abuse in the language was applied to him; and every action, or expression of his life, that could be tortured into a sinister meaning, was raked up in order to show his inconsistency, yet after all, they proved so few and frivolous, that they have not been thought worth repeating; and thus, he "whose whole life had been a struggle for the liberty of others," was reviled as the enemy of all liberty.

The truth perhaps was, that their and his ideas of liberty were, and always had been, different. They chose to become angry because a man so long and so generally celebrated as its advocate, should hesitate to give his sanction to any thing which assumed the name, however questionable might be the substance; they made no allowances for having mistaken him, or for his not agreeing with them in the detail; because he differed in opinion with them, it was inferred, however absurdly, that he must differ from himself. They thought that liberty, no matter in what shape and garb it came, or how accompanied, or by whatever qualities or characteristics distinguished, must necessarily be good. They looked chiefly to the abstract idea of the thing, not to the form it assumed, or the effects it produced.

Mr. Burke, on the contrary, would not allow the term liberty to be applicable to a system whose course was stained by incessant violence and bloodshed; which inflicted or permitted the most grinding tyranny and injustice on persons and property; which was in itself a crude and untried theory, unsanctioned by reason and undisciplined by law; at variance with the experience of mankind, and with the ancient and reasonable habits and institutions of the country itself. The liberty decreed by the National Assembly he considered the vilest of mockeries. Liberty, no matter how plausible the form or high-sounding its pretensions, was in his opinion liberty only, when it secured equal civil rights, equal justice and protection, equal social enjoyments and privileges to all members of the community.

Sentiments similar to these occur so frequently in his earlier and later Works, in all his speeches and writings on the subject, that it seems strange how they could ever be misunderstood. The passage already quoted from his speech against the repeal of the Marriage Act,\* in 1781, speaks this language so forcibly and explicitly that no excuse can avail for mistaking or misrepresenting it. Another passage from an old report of one of his speeches at Bristol, in 1774, illustrates similar sentiments: "The distinguishing part of our constitution is its liberty. To preserve

\* See page 224.



that liberty inviolate seems the particular duty and proper trust of a member of the House of Commons. *But the liberty, the only liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with order; that not only exists along with virtue and order, but which cannot exist without them.*" Addressing the same constituents in 1780, in allusion to the condition of the Roman Catholics, he says, "*I must fairly tell you, that so far as my principles are concerned (principles that I hope will only depart with my last breath), that I have no idea of a liberty unconnected with honesty and justice; \* \* factions in republics have been and are full as capable as monarchs of the most cruel oppression and injustice; it is but too true, that the love and even the very idea of genuine liberty is extremely rare.*"—

Any one professing such sentiments as these could not in fact, to preserve his consistency, do otherwise than oppose the French Revolution as Mr. Burke opposed it, for it corresponded with none of his conceptions of genuine freedom. We have seen that he had his doubts of its nature from the first, and far from blowing hot and cold upon it in a breath like some of his contemporaries, gradually rose from caution to apprehension, from apprehension to certainty, that such proceedings as he saw going on could be productive only of enormous evils. He did not hate the revolution in France simply because it was a revolution,\* but because it was an execrably bad one; or rather the utter dissolution, at a blow, of government, religion, and morals—all the elements which not merely bind men together, but have in fact from the condition of savages made us men. He did not war against liberty, but against the abuses committed under its name; not against freedom but against licentiousness. He allowed no inherent power in the half or the majority of a nation to annihilate the persons, the property, or the honours of the remainder, at their will and pleasure, by way of political experiment or speculative improvement; "he could not admit the right of any people to do what they pleased, until he first knew what it pleased them to do."

It is a remarkable fact, and another instance of the keenness and length of view of Mr. Burke, that though the danger was obvious to him, neither the government nor the nation at large had any idea that French opinions and principles were so generally diffused in England, or that they had made so many converts. But the publication of his book disclosed the extent of

\* It is well known that he highly approved of the revolution in Poland, going on about the same time, because, instead of plunging their country into anarchy, the leading men there exerted all their talents to rescue it from such a state by instituting a wise and constitutional form of government. Unhappily it proved ill-timed. Catherine of Russia made it a pretext for annihilating both it and the existence of the country as an independent state; and Buonaparte, when it was in his power, had not generosity enough to reverse the iniquitous proceeding.



the mischief which had been silently though rapidly spreading, by the number of answers it produced; the writer of this has counted no less than thirty-eight which came out within a few months, and several have doubtless escaped his notice, while others may have appeared at a later period; but were all the letters, essays, fragments, and invectives of every denomination collected, which have appeared then and since, in magazines, reviews, newspapers, annual registers, and every form of publication, periodical and otherwise, on this prolific theme, they would amount to many thousands.

In the list of opponents were the names of Priestley, Price (who dying soon after the appearance of the "Reflections," which his sermon had partly provoked, was said by his friends to have hurt him, and by others to have killed him), Earl Stanhope, Mrs. Wollstonecraft, Mrs. Macaulay Graham, the historian, Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Mackintosh, and Thomas Paine. Some of their works have voluntarily sought oblivion, and some have been reluctantly forced into it. The "*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*" alone was the production of a more sober inquirer, a scholar, and a gentleman, who though he then wrote upon politics with the dim and flickering light of a closet philosopher, since learned to judge and to act in a more practical spirit, chiefly by the teaching of that very master whom he had thus ventured to oppose, and whom he soon afterwards characterized as—"A writer who was admired by all mankind for his eloquence, but who is, if possible, still more admired by all competent judges for his philosophy; a writer of whom I may justly say, that he was *gravissimus et dicendi et intelligendi auctor et magister.*" Even from the first, however, he exhibited the confidence in himself of one who could afford to be at once bold and liberal in his opposition to the great orator—who could advocate what he thought freedom to others without madly assaulting the foundations of our own, who could investigate doctrines without descending to personal abuse of the author, who, in endeavouring to refute them, could admit his worth, his extraordinary powers, and, in spite of the clamour to the contrary, the general consistency of his life and principles. Such a man was Sir James Mackintosh, a statesman of the first class, who, if not at the head of the party with whom he so long and so vainly laboured, was certainly not justled from it by anything like superiority of mind among its more acknowledged leaders.

Of a very different description was "The Rights of Man," by Thomas Paine. This remarkable character, who had arrived from America in 1787, brought with him a letter of introduction to Mr. Burke from the Hon. Henry Laurens, Ex-President of Congress, and who, it will be remembered, had been released from the Tower in 1781, by the exertions of the former, request-

ing the exertion of his influence to attract public notice to some mechanical contrivances of Mr. Paine, particularly the model of an iron bridge. Mr. Burke, with his accustomed hospitality, invited him to Beaconsfield, took him during a summer excursion to Yorkshire to several iron-foundries there in order to gain the opinions of practical men, and introduced him to several persons of rank; to which there is an allusion in the following note to Mr. Wilkes:—

“My dear Sir,

“I come at your requisition to the service of a cause rendered dearer to me by your accession to it. Since you will have it so I will eat venison in honour of old England; let me know at Gerrard Street when and where. You make too much of the prattle of the world and the effect of any opinion of mine, whether real or supposed. The libels and the panegyrics of the newspapers can neither frighten nor flatter me out of my principles; but (except for the evil of example) it is no matter at all if they did. However, since you think my appearance something, you shall have me in my blue and buff; we all indeed long very much to see you, and are much your humble servants. I am just going to dine with the Duke of Portland, in company with the great American Paine, whom I take with me.

“Ever, my dear Sir,

“Your most affectionate faithful friend,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“Beaconsfield, August 18th, 1788.

At this time, Paine, whom it is doubtful that he knew to be an Englishman, professed to have wholly relinquished politics. But soon afterwards having visited France in order to inspect the plans and models in the public Office of Bridges and Highways introduced by a letter from Dr. Franklin to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the incipient disorders of that country revived in his mind the dormant spirit of turbulence and dissatisfaction towards existing institutions, which seemed inherent in him; he returned to England to all appearance well-informed of the designs of the popular leaders, of which many intelligible intimations were dropped to Mr. Burke, with a recommendation to him that he should endeavour to introduce a *more enlarged system of liberty* into England, using Reform in Parliament as the most obvious means.

This hint, thrown out probably to sound him, was as may be believed coldly received. “Do you really imagine, Mr. Paine, that the constitution of this kingdom requires such innovations, or could exist with them, or that any reflecting man would seriously engage in them? You are aware that I have all my life opposed such schemes of reform; of course, because I knew them not to be reform.” Not discouraged by this rebuff, Paine

continued his correspondence from Paris in the summer of 1789, and there is no doubt whatever, first communicated to his distinguished acquaintance certain information that the destruction of the monarchy was resolved upon; that the leaders had determined to set fire to the four corners of France sooner than not carry their principles into practice; and that no danger was to be apprehended from the army, for it was *gained*. This remarkable note is said by a friend of Mr. Burke's to be dated only three days before the destruction of the Bastile.

Though his intimacy with Mr. Burke had somewhat declined previously to the appearance of the "Reflections," his more noxious peculiarities remained unknown, the leveller and the deist being shrouded under the guise of the ingenious mechanist. But the "Rights of Man," written as an answer to Mr. Burke's work, exhibited at once the mental deformity of the man, inimical to nearly every thing that bore the stamp of authority, or of time, or of opinion. In accordance with this unhappy and mischievous disposition, he had long before stifled the best feelings of our nature by voluntary dereliction of the marriage ties and duties; he had divested himself of the troublesome restraints of religion; he had shaken off all confined notions of attachment to his country. Nothing of an Englishman remained of him but the name, and even this he tried to extinguish by becoming successively by adoption an American and a Frenchman: but as his principles were a scandal to all, so all perhaps would willingly be rid of the dishonour attached to owning such a citizen.

It was his aim, by perverting what capacity he possessed, not to make men better or happier, but to be discontented with what they were, with what they knew, or with what they already enjoyed. His systems, both in religion and politics, led not merely to the disorganization of states, but of the human mind itself, by setting it adrift on the waters of doubt and despair, without a resting-place or landmark for its guidance in this world, or hope in the next. To a style of writing and reasoning well adapted to impose upon ordinary understandings, he added a cool temper and designing head, unfettered by the common restraints and scruples of mankind. To the trades of staymaker, schoolmaster, and exciseman, in his native country, he had added what is so often the resort of desperate men, the profession of a patriot in America. He had proved a brute to his wife, a cheat to his trust, a traitor to his country, a reviler of his God and of his King; and having already successfully aided and abetted rebellion abroad, seemed to be cut out for the presiding genius of a revolution at home, if not prematurely taken off by the hand of the executioner. But, as if in his own person to warn us of the desolating tendency of his doctrines, he completed the catalogue of his offences by adultery with the wife of his friend, by the brutal treatment and desertion of his victim, by inveterate drunkenness, and abominable filth of person. The



very excess of his moral degradation almost made him an object of compassion. His life was evil, and his end miserable.

The book was characteristic of the man. Its purpose was, through the debasing principle of envy which is after all the main principle of a leveller, to reduce all mankind to one standard, to write up a sort of *confusion made easy*, by addressing the baser to war against the better passions of our nature, by pulling down superior station, talents, virtues, and distinctions to the level of the lowest. It was an open declaration of hostility to all the institutions which we in England had been accustomed to consider as our ornament and pride; not a reform of the real or imaginary abuses of government, but a pretty plain recommendation to pull it down altogether for the pleasure of building afresh on the republican model—good perhaps in the eyes of an American, but at variance with the habits, the feelings, the opinions, the honest convictions and prejudices of an Englishman. It affords an illustration of the frenzy of the day, that this production was devoured rather than read, idolized rather than praised by that strong party, many of them of rank and influence, who intent on committing a species of moral suicide, disseminated it in cheap editions through the country; thus flinging a fire-brand into every cottage to burst out and consume themselves; while in the clubs and societies of cities the same insane spirit of animosity, under cover of affected satisfaction, was shown in the favourite toast constantly drunk—“thanks to Mr. Burke for the discussion he has provoked,”—as if they malignantly hoped or wished the world to believe, that he had injured those vital interests of the state, of which in fact his book proved the salvation.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that two others of his literary opponents on this question, Mr. Christie and Mr. Bousefield, were among the number of his personal acquaintance. The latter, who proved to be the most virulent, had been recommended to the notice of Burke by some of his friends in the county of Cork, of which that person was a native, and had in consequence participated largely in the hospitalities of Beaconsfield, as well as something in the friendship of its owner. The only return he made was by venting upon him nearly all the abuse of which he was master. Of another of his republican acquaintance of rather more celebrity than these persons, he gave the following account, when speaking of the address of a deputation from the constitutional society of London, formed of Joel Barlow and John Frost, to the National Convention, with a message expressing a hope that all nations would soon follow their example in effecting a similar revolution, and making a patriotic present of a thousand pairs of shoes to the soldiers of liberty:—

“The extravagance of Anacharsis Cloutz in wishing to embrace China, Quebec, Bulam, and in short all the world, in the confraternity of France, was not peculiar to him, but was also en-

tertained by all the members of the Assembly. This Cloutz was an old acquaintance and correspondent of his, being very respectably introduced to him, and had no small share in producing the French Revolution. He was a Prussian by birth, highly conversant in every branch of literature; and much better qualified to act the part of a philosopher than John Frost as a deputy from the people of Great Britain. In June 1790 this man appeared at the bar of the National Assembly, accompanied by men of all nations, Asiatic, African, and European, of which latter the English made no inconsiderable part. There, as orator of the human race, he invoked for them all the protection and confraternity of France; and this happened on the very day when the Assembly demolished, by a decree, the nobility of France."

The translator of the "Reflections" (Mons. Dupont) conceiving that the character given in that work of Henry IV. of France was somewhat harsh, and might be displeasing to royalist ears in that country, requested him to revise and soften it, and in reply, received the following justification of what he had already advanced; which, as containing his opinion of a great historical character, the reader will not be displeased to see here, particularly as he will not find it any where else. The passage objected to runs thus—

"Henry of Navarre was a politic and active prince. He possessed indeed great humanity and mildness: but an humanity and mildness that never stood in the way of his interests. He never sought to be loved without first putting himself in a way to be feared. He used soft language with determined conduct. He asserted and maintained his humanity in the gross, and distributed his acts of concession only in the detail. He spent the income of his prerogative nobly, but he took care not to break in upon the capital; never abandoning, for a moment, any of the claims which he made under the fundamental laws, nor sparing to shed the blood of those who opposed him, often in the field, sometimes upon the scaffold."

"Sir,

"Yesterday I had the honour of receiving your letter, in which you desire that I may revise and soften the expressions which I have made use of concerning Henry IV., King of France. I am not at all surprised at your request, for, since your childhood, you have heard every one talk of the pleasing manners and mild temper of that Prince. Those qualities have shaded, and almost obliterated, that vigilance and vigour without which he would never have either merited or enjoyed the title of Great. The intention of this is self-evident. The name of Henry IV. recalls the idea of his popularity; the sovereigns of France are proud to have descended from this hero, and are taught to look up to him as to a model. It is under the shelter of his venerable name that



all the conspirators against the laws, against religion, and against good order, have dared to persuade their King that he ought to abandon all the precautions of power to the designs of ambition. After having thus disarmed, they have resolved to deliver their Sovereign, his nobility, and his magistrates (the natural supporters of his throne), into the hands of thieves and of assassins. It is a long time since this plot was first formed. It was resolved to put it into execution according to circumstances; and the mode adopted of every where suspending the portraits of Henry IV. was one of the means employed for the success of the design—a means truly perfidious, as it holds out snares to the unwary, and catches mankind by the bait of their own virtues.

“Every time that this politic Prince had occasion to deliver one of his insinuating harangues (which was very often), he took particular care not to be too literal in his expressions. It was, I suppose, to a kind of assembly of notables that he spoke of his design to free himself entirely from their restraint. But when he employed these courtly threats, of which, by the bye, he was very liberal, he advanced his right foot, and, as he himself says, ‘always clapped his hand upon the hilt of his sword.’ Those men whose power is envied, and against whom violent factions are formed, cannot with safety be good in any other manner. Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and all others in similar situations, who have dared to be virtuous, could never have enjoyed this arduous and critical pre-eminence but by inviolably pursuing all the means in their power of attracting respect, and of sustaining their authority. Without this, they could not have exercised their benevolence. In such a situation a prince may with safety, and with as much sagacity as glory, divide his authority with his people, because then he has the power to divide it at his discretion, and is not forced to abandon it.

“Whatever may be the honour annexed to such a voluntary division, whatever may be the political motive that can induce a sovereign to make such a sacrifice in certain cases, Henry IV. neither did the one nor the other; he never, in any manner whatever, parted with an atom of his authority. Did he ever leave it to the judgment of the citizens of Paris to determine the right which the laws of the kingdom gave him, of being their King and their Sovereign? Did they ever enter into any treaty with him concerning his title to the throne? Where is there, in the long catalogue of the unlimited prerogatives of the King of France (be they just or unjust) an article which he ever abandoned, limited, or even submitted to inquiry? He would have been still more illustrious, if, after having purchased and conquered his kingdom, he had done this, and if he had become the founder of a regular constitution. Historical facts have not furnished me with the means of deciding, in a proper manner, if ever he found himself in a situation to acquire this glory, or if he then could have made



any attempts of that kind, with a greater degree of safety than has been done on a recent occasion. But it is very probable that he never had any of this kind. If you read the Memoirs of Sully with attention (and I suppose that the opinions of the Minister differed little from those of his master), you will easily perceive that they were both royalists in all the extent of the expression, and, with some few exceptions, they constantly maintained that species of government.

“As to the blood that Henry shed, he never spilt one drop more than was necessary for the maintenance of his right, which he on no occasion would submit to any species of popular decision; he however could kill when it was necessary. How many bloody battles did he not fight against the majority of the French nation? How many cities did he not sack and pillage? Was his Minister ashamed of sharing the booty that fell into his hands? It is true, that while closely besieging his own capital, he relieved and protected the unfortunate families who, at the peril of their lives, sallied forth to gather a scanty harvest under the walls of this very capital. I approve this conduct, but it does not inspire me with an enthusiastic admiration. He would have almost been a monster in cruelty, and an idiot in politics, had he done otherwise. But while he was so compassionate to a few wretches dying of hunger, one cannot forget that it was he himself who famished them by hundreds and by thousands, before he was in a situation to treat thus compassionately a few isolated individuals. It is true, indeed, that in starving Paris he did nothing but what was conformable to the right of war; but that was a right which he enforced in all its plenitude. He followed the dictates of his heart and of his policy in the acts of compassion attributed to him; as to the famine which he occasioned, it was in consequence of the position of his army. But can you support the panegyrists of Henry IV. in regard to this very siege of Paris, when you recollect the late deplorable scarcity, and, above all, what has been done in consequence of that unhappy epoch? Of the occurrences that followed I shall not speak at present, although I think that that ought to be done to inspire every honest heart with horror and indignation.

“As to the ‘scaffold,’ it is impossible to decide at this moment whether it would not have been more prudent for Henry IV. to have saved the Marechal de Biron, instead of cutting off his head within the walls of the Bastile. He was under great obligations to this Marechal of France, as well as to his father; but Henry was less remarkable for his gratitude than his clemency. As he never shed blood but for just reasons, I suppose that he thought himself obliged to do it then, on account of the good of his people and the security of his throne. It must be allowed, however, that if he had pardoned this rash and impetuous man, he would never have been reproached with this act of commiseration. If

he imagined that the Marechal de Biron was capable of some of those scenes which we have lately seen exhibited in your kingdom; if he supposed that he might produce the same anarchy, the same confusion, and the same distress,\* as the same preliminaries to a humiliating and vexatious tyranny, which we are on the point of beholding in France under the name of a Constitution: it was right, very right, to cut, on its very formation, the very first thread of so many treasons!

“He would never have merited the crown that he acquired, and which he wore with so much glory, if, interposing his compassion to defeat the preservative effects of a severe execution, he had scrupled to punish those traitors and enemies of their country and of the human race; for, believe me, there can be no virtue where there is no wisdom. Weakness only, that is to say, the parent and ally of crimes, would have allowed itself to be affected by misdeeds, which have a connexion with power, and which aim at the usurpation of a certain degree of authority. To pardon such enemies, is to do the same thing as those who attempt the destruction of religion, of the laws, of policy, of morality, of industry, of liberty, and of the prosperity of your country. If Henry IV. had such subjects as those who rule France at this very moment, he would do nothing more than his duty in punishing them. The present Sovereign is in the situation of a victim, and not the avenger of rebellion. It is rather a misfortune than a crime, that he has not prevented this revolution with that vigorous precaution, that activity, and that momentary decision, which characterized Henry IV. Louis XVI., according to what I hear and believe, has received from nature as perfect an understanding, and a heart as soft and humane, as his illustrious ancestors. These are, indeed, the elements of virtue; but he was born under the canopy of a throne, and was not prepared by adversity for a situation, the trials of which the most perfect and the most absolute virtue could have scarce resisted.

“As to the men, the means, the prettexts, the projects, the consequences arising from false plans and false calculations, of every nature and every species, which have reduced this Sovereign to appear in no better light than an instrument for the ruin of his country—these are circumstances to be recorded and commented on by the historian.—These remarks, Sir, have been occasioned by reading your letter; you may print them as an appendix to your work, or in whatever manner you please; or you may keep them for your own private satisfaction. I leave it entirely to your discretion.

“I am, Sir,

“Your very humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“Beaconsfield, January 2nd, 1791.”

\* An allusion to the conduct of the Duke of Orleans.

A reply from the French correspondent to whom the "Reflections" had been addressed, dated 17th November, 1790, gave Mr. Burke an opportunity of following up his blow by a rejoinder entitled "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly." In this, which appeared in February, 1791, he advances many new observations, sets others in stronger lights, and glances at the characters of some of their writers whose principles it was the fashion to follow, as being no better than what he, on another occasion, termed "the mere jays and magpies of philosophy." Rousseau he sketches in strong, yet not undue terms, when considered, as he says he must be, either "as a moralist or as nothing."

"We have had the great professor and founder of the *philosophy of vanity* in England.\* As I had good opportunities of knowing his proceedings almost from day to day, he left no doubt on my mind that he entertained no principle either to influence his heart or to guide his understanding, but *vanity*. With this vice he was possessed to a degree little short of madness. It is from the same deranged eccentric vanity that this, the insane *Socrates* of the National Assembly, was impelled to publish a mad confession of his mad faults, and to attempt a new sort of glory from bringing hardily to light the obscure and vulgar vices which we know may sometimes be blended with eminent talents. He has not observed on the nature of vanity, who does not know that it is omnivorous; that it has no choice in its food; that it is fond to talk even of its own faults and vices, as what will excite surprise and draw attention, and what will pass at worst for openness and candour.

"It was this abuse and perversion which vanity makes even of hypocrisy, which has driven Rousseau to record a life, not so much as chequered or spotted here and there with virtues, or even distinguished by a single good action. It is such a life he chooses to offer to the attention of mankind. It is such a life that, with a wild defiance, he flings in the face of his Creator, whom he acknowledges only to brave. Your Assembly, knowing how much more powerful example is found than precept, has chosen this man (by his own account, without a single virtue) for a model. To him they erect their first statue. From him they commence their series of honours and distinctions."

He asserts in this letter, from almost positive knowledge, that the excesses of the revolution were not accidental, as some believed, or pretended to believe; but were systematically designed

\* In 1766, when he came, on the invitation of Hume, and behaved to him in a manner so extraordinary as to be inexplicable in any other way than to suppose him to be wholly possessed by what may be termed the *insanity* of vanity. Mr. Burke was then in frequent communication with Hume, from the connexion of the latter with Lord Hertford, who, with his brother, General Conway, supported, and indeed formed part of the Rockingham Administration, and from the philosopher himself he personally heard the proceedings of his extraordinary guest.



from the beginning, even previous to the meeting of the states-general. He hints likewise at the necessity for that coalition of the sovereigns of Europe against France, which first actually took place a few months afterward; and explicitly states the intention of the prevailing faction to put the King to death whenever his name should become no longer necessary to their designs.

The declaration by the French Ambassador, at this period, of his Sovereign's acceptance of the new constitution, drew from Mr. Burke a paper privately presented to the Ministry, "Hints for a Memorial to M. De Montmorin." It recommended the offer of British mediation between that monarch and his subjects on the basis of a free constitution, to be guaranteed, if required, by England; and in case of refusal by the popular party, to intimate the design of withdrawing our Minister from a Court where the Sovereign no longer enjoyed personal liberty or political consideration. General opinion since has been in favour of the policy of the advice.

In the mean time several threatened indications proclaimed an approaching breach of the most appalling kind in the Whig party, very few of whom, or indeed scarcely one except three or four of his personal friends could be persuaded by Mr. Burke of the irretrievable mischiefs at work in France, and likely to approach our own shores. Mr. Fox expressed his approval of the principles, though not of the proceedings there, twice or thrice in no measured terms; once, April 15th, in a debate on the Russian armament, when Mr. Burke rising to reply, was overpowered by continued cries of question from his own side of the House, and by the late hour (three o'clock) in the morning; and again on a Bill providing a constitution for Canada, April 8th, when Mr. Burke was not present. On this occasion Mr. Fox directed pointed censure against some of the chief doctrines in Mr. Burke's late publications, directly questioning the utility of hereditary power or honours, or of titles of rank, and concluding with a sneer at "ribbons red and blue." These opinions might have been honest, though perhaps neither very sound nor in the very best taste; they were unquestionably imprudent; they were verbatim the revolutionary cant of the day, to which sanction was thus given by a man of no ordinary weight and influence in the country; and they could not well be considered otherwise than as a direct challenge to discussion on a most irritable theme, addressed indirectly by him to his old associate.\*

As such Mr. Burke evidently considered it, when, on the 6th of May, on the same bill, he rose to state his sentiments in reply. But in adverting to the French Constitution by name, and the unhappy scenes to which it had given rise, he was loudly called to order from the Opposition benches. Mr. Fox, who had himself

\* Mr. Sheridan had also about the same time reiterated the same opinions.

made allusions as strong by implication and by name to the same measure, unexpectedly assailed him by an ironical defence, recommending to the House in effect to let him say what he pleased. Mr. Burke, after noticing this circumstance, resumed his argument, and again experienced successively seven other formal interruptions, at short intervals, accompanied by speeches to order from different members of his own party, while at the same moment, others on the opposite or ministerial side maintaining he was perfectly in order, this contention presenting, amid contending shouts of Chair! chair! Hear! hear! Order! order! Go on! go on! a scene which Mr. Burke remarked at the moment was only to be paralleled in the political meetings of a neighbouring country of which he was endeavouring to convey some idea to the House.

At length, an express vote of censure for noticing the affairs of France was moved against him by Lord Sheffield, and seconded by Mr. Fox; Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, who had repeatedly cheered the speech, leaned to his views, urged that he was in order, that he was grateful to the right hon. gentleman for the manly struggle made by him against French principles, that his views should receive his support whenever the danger approached, and that his zeal and eloquence in such a cause entitled him to the warmest gratitude of all his fellow-subjects. Mr. Fox followed in a vehement address, alternately rebuking and complimenting Mr. Burke, in a high strain, and while vindicating his own opinions, questioning the truth and consistency of those of his right hon. friend who he must ever esteem his master, but who nevertheless seemed to have forgotten the lessons he had taught him; and in support of the charge of inconsistency thus advanced, he quoted several sarcastic and ludicrous remarks of little moment at any time and scarcely worth repeating then, but which, as they had been expressed fourteen and fifteen years before, seemed to have been raked up purposely for the occasion.

There was an appearance of premeditation and want of generosity in this, which hurt Mr. Burke, as he afterwards expressed to a friend, more than any public occurrence of his life, and he rose to reply under the influence of very painful but very strong feelings. He complained, after debating the main question, of being treated with harshness and malignity for which the motive seemed unaccountable—of being personally attacked from a quarter where he least expected it after an intimacy of more than twenty-two years,—of his public sentiments and writings being garbled, and his confidential communications violated, to give colour to an unjust charge; and that, though at his time of life it was obviously indiscreet to provoke enemies or to lose friends, as he could not hope for the opportunities necessary to acquire others, yet if his steady adherence to the British constitution placed him in such a dilemma, he would risk all, and as public duty and public prudence taught him, with his last breath exclaim,



“Fly from the French constitution!” Mr. Fox here whispered, “there is no loss of friendship.” “I regret to say there is,” was the reply—“I know the value of my line of conduct; I have, indeed, made a great sacrifice; I have done my duty though I have lost my friend; there is something in the detested French constitution that envenoms every thing it touches;” and, after a variety of comments on the question, previous and subsequent to this avowal, concluded with an eloquent apostrophe to the two great heads of their respective parties, steadfastly to guard against innovation and new theories, whatever might be their other differences, the sacred edifice of the British constitution.

Unusually agitated by this public and pointed renunciation of long intimacy, Mr. Fox rose evidently much affected, and at length found relief in tears.—Some moments elapsed before he had recovered sufficiently to proceed in his address, when, besides touching on the bill and on French affairs, an eloquent appeal burst forth to his old and revered friend—to the remembrance of their past attachment—their unalienable friendship—their reciprocal affection, as dear and almost as binding as the ties of nature between father and son. Seldom had there been heard in the House of Commons an appeal so pathetic and so personal. Yet even at this moment when he was seemingly dissolved in tenderness, the pertinacity of the professed and thoroughbred disputant prevailed over the feelings of the man; he gave utterance to unusually bitter sarcasms, reiterated his objectionable remarks, adding others not of the most conciliatory tendency, and of course rather aggravating than extenuating the original offence. Rejoinders on both sides followed, without subsiding into more amicable sentiments, and thenceforward the intimacy of these illustrious men ceased.

Such are, in brief, the facts connected with this memorable dispute, which excited more general interest, and produced more important results, than any thing similar in our political annals. Opposition instantly saw in it the loss of much of that consequence they had hitherto enjoyed as a body in the State, and though at first thunderstruck at the consequences, soon proceeded to utter the harshest animadversions upon Mr. Burke, both at the breaking up of the House, as well as on all occasions afterwards during his life, and continued by writers of the same political partialities even to this day, not one of whom, however, but misrepresents the circumstances of the quarrel, or attributes it, on the part of that gentleman, either to a preconcerted scheme to quit them, or to splenetic ill-humour at not being permitted to dictate the line of conduct of the body of which he was a member.

These assertions are now known to be wholly false. If design can be attributed to either party, it would seem assuredly to have rested rather with Mr. Fox and his friends than with Mr. Burke, for though they probably did not desire an open rupture with him,



they went the precise way to work in order to effect it; for there is not a stronger instance in Parliamentary history than this, of what may be termed a *dead set*\* being made upon a Member to prevent him from delivering his sentiments on an extraordinary and questionable event upon the trifling pretext of being out of order. Admitting him for argument sake to have been out of order, which was not the case as the House decided, was it the business of his *friends* to attack him upon that head?—of the men, with whom he had been so long associated, whose career he had often directed, whose battles he had fought, whose credit he had been the first to raise in public esteem—to assail him with vehement disapprobation, persevering interruptions, and votes of censure? All that he asked for, or expected at the moment, was the liberty of expressing his sentiments—and this they in effect told him he should not be permitted to have upon that particular subject. The natural inference was, that it was too precious in their esteem to be suffered to be exposed to the Sirocco of his eloquence, lest it should be incurably scorched, or wholly destroyed by the blast. There was something in this of political ingratitude, and obviously no small portion of folly and indiscretion, for it impressed a general belief in the country that the minority, instead of viewing the French question as a matter of indifference, or even as one of calm inquiry and deliberation, had at once and so heartily adopted its spirit, as to proceed to the last extremities with one of the heads of their body, sooner than hear him treat it with reprobation.

There are a variety of other reasons which tell strongly in favour of Mr. Burke. Far from being the first to broach the topic as a provocative to quarrel, he had, on the contrary, studiously avoided it in this and the preceding sessions, until introduced by the very persons who now professed to wish to avoid the subject. It was obviously his interest not to disagree with those with whom he had been so long connected, and more especially at this moment, when it was believed, in consequence of words which fell from the King on the dispute with Russia, that they were likely to come into power.† He had already explicitly declared his intention to separate from the dearest friends he possessed, who should give countenance to the revolutionary doctrines then afloat, and the breach with Mr. Sheridan proved that this was no idle threat. He doubtless felt displeased that his general principles should be, if not misrepresented, at least so far misapplied, as to become the means of charging him with dereliction.

\* Burke himself wittily observed at a subsequent time, that the topic of France, though open to every one else, was by the opposition *taboo'ed*, to him—by what rite of authority, or superstition, he could not divine.

† Mr. Fox had himself communicated to Burke a few days before a speech made by the King at the levee to the effect, that if the government could not be properly conducted by Mr. Pitt it might be done by others, for *he* was not wedded to him.

tion of principle. He might be angry that this should be done by one who had so long been his friend, and who made it his chief boast even at the moment of contest that he was his disciple. He could not be well pleased that this disciple should condemn his book without ceremony, as an attack on all free governments. He could not be highly conciliated by that friend withdrawing from him, as had been the case for several preceding years, much of that public confidence which he had hitherto reposed in him; for as little similarity existed in their private pursuits, they were political friends or they were nothing; and the withholding of confidence on such subjects became, in fact, a tacit dissolution of the compact by which they were united.

But in addition to these considerations, there were in the cause of disunion, circumstances which rendered it quite impossible they could continue on the same terms as before. The dispute was not about a private or trivial, but a great constitutional matter which superseded all minor considerations,—not a hackneyed or speculative topic on which they might amicably differ, and pass on to the consideration of others on which they agreed, but one in its consequences involving the very existence of the state. It was a question wholly new: it was one which agitated almost every man in the kingdom; it was constantly and progressively before the eyes of Parliament; it met the leaders at every turn in debate, and in some form or another mingled in every discussion of fact or principle. It was in itself full of difficulties, of jagged points and sharp angles, against which neither of them could rub without feeling some degree of irritation; and it was one on which from the first each seemed to have staked his whole reputation for political wisdom against the other; Mr. Fox with all the enthusiasm of a generous, confiding, and unwary man; Mr. Burke with the penetration of a profound philosopher, and the calculating sagacity of a practical statesman. In support of their opinions both were quite as vehement as the case required; the one pushing on, or being pushed by, Opposition, to apologize for the misdeeds of the French Revolution; the other outstripping the van of the Ministry in their bitter reprobation.

Constant contention such as this promised to be, “hand to hand and foot to foot,” as Mr. Burke expressed his determination to contend, could lead, especially with an old associate, only to coldness; and from coldness to alienation, from alienation to dislike, the steps are few, and quick, and certain. A breach, therefore, sooner or later appeared to be inevitable. Whether it ought not to have taken place by degrees, and with less of publicity, is merely matter of opinion, and at best is of little consequence. An open and decisive expression of his mind (to a fault) had hitherto characterized Mr. Burke upon all occasions, and he probably thought the same mode of conduct now more honourable in itself, and more calculated to impress upon the country a sense of the



magnitude of its danger, and the sincerity of his conviction that the danger was near.

From the moment indeed that Mr. Fox pronounced such decided panegyrics upon the French Constitution, and particularly on the 15th of April, when Mr. Burke, as already noticed, was prevented from replying to it by the clamour of his own party, a rupture between them distinctly appeared at hand. The former long afterwards used to regret the interruption the latter had then received, saying that though the conflict between them might have been hotter and fiercer at the moment, it would probably have left no unpleasant feelings behind. In fact, the very next morning after this unhandsome conduct, a general alarm at the consequences of it spread through the party. Several conciliatory explanations were offered to Mr. Burke, and some apologies, while many who agreed in Mr. Fox's opinions did not hesitate to condemn him for imprudence in expressing them, though it is equally true that he had been urged to the measure by those very persons, and for not having already done so, two or three of the number had been tempted to say he was deficient in firmness.

On the other hand, some of Mr. Burke's personal friends and the connexions of the Duke of Portland, though they thought nearly as he did of the proceedings in France, wished him nevertheless to pass over the opinions and the challenges of Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan in silence. This he urged was impossible. He was willing to forget, he said, the total want of consideration and respect shown to himself on several recent occasions, and the pretty plain abuse directed against his writings, yet in addition to these, without any overt act of his to cause such a proceeding, he had been thrice within a week pointedly dared to the discussion, and standing as he did, pledged to the House and to the country upon the subject in a manner which no other Member was, it would look like political cowardice in him to shrink from the contest. Besides, he thought Mr. Fox's opinions of great weight in the country, and should not be permitted to circulate through it uncontradicted. He was further impelled, he added, by an imperious sense of public duty, which he considered paramount to all other considerations. These reasons, however, were deemed scarcely sufficient by his friends, though this did not relax his determination.

In the mean time, he was informed that the adherents of Mr. Fox had determined to interrupt him on any allusions to French affairs, by urging the point of order; and that gentleman himself, in company with a friend, waited upon him to request that the discussion might be postponed till another opportunity, which Mr. Burke, in answer, pointed out was not likely to occur again during any other business of the Session. To convince Mr. Fox, however, that nothing personal or offensive would proceed from him, he stated explicitly what he meant to say, mentioning the heads



of his arguments, and the limitations he designed to impose on himself; an instance of candour which Mr. Fox returned by relating the favourable expressions of himself just alluded to, recently uttered by the King. The interview, therefore, though not quite satisfactory, excited no hostile feelings; on the contrary, they walked down to the House together, and together entered it, but found that Mr. Sheridan had moved to postpone the re-commitment of the bill until after the Easter holidays.

As a proof, however, of the spirit which actuated the late associates of Burke, one of them,\* as if fated to fan afresh the now almost extinguished flame of dissension, on this very evening took occasion to observe that the affair of the Quebec Government had been improperly treated, by involving the consideration of the general principles of government, and the constitutions of other countries; on which occasion insinuations had been thrown out against the opinions of some of the gentlemen with whom he acted. If, therefore, he found the minister, or *any other right honourable gentleman*, wander from the strict discussion of the matter, he should call him to order and take the sense of the House upon it. The allusion to Mr. Burke was palpable, and so he considered it, but nevertheless did not rise to reply.

Mr. Fox, with more candour and consideration, admitted, that in forming a government for a colony, some attention should be paid to the general principles of all governments; and he himself had during this session alluded, perhaps, too often, to the French Revolution; he had also spoken much on the government of the American States, because they were in the vicinity of Canada; but on the Quebec bill he had only uttered one silly levity,† not worth recollection, relative to the French Revolution; he meant an allusion to the extinction of nobility in France, and its revival in Canada. He was not in the habit of concealing his opinions; neither did he retract any which he had heretofore advanced on this subject; and when the Quebec bill came again to be discussed, though, from the respect he entertained for some of his friends, he should be sorry to differ from them, yet he would deliver his opinions fearlessly. Mr. Powys remarked, in return, that the debate had turned irregularly both on retrospect and anticipation, and hinted that Mr. Fox should have followed the example of Mr. Burke, in writing, rather than in speaking there, of the French Revolution.

Mr. Burke, in a very affecting manner, assured the House that nothing depressed him more—nothing had ever more affected him in body and mind—than the thought of meeting his friend as an adversary and antagonist. After noticing the anticipation just

\* Mr. M. A. Taylor.

† This was, that “nobility stunk in the nostrils of the people of America,” and much more to that effect. The phrase itself was not original, but had been used by Burke many years before in allusion to a former unpopular House of Commons.

suggested, and the observations accompanying it, he declared his sentiments, that in framing a new constitution, it became necessary to refer to principles of government and examples of other constitutions, because a material part of every political question was to see to what extent certain principles had been adopted, and how they had succeeded in other places. His opinions on government he presumed not to be unknown, as gentlemen had lately become fond of quoting him in that House; and the more he considered the French Constitution, the more sorry he was to see it viewed with any degree of favour. Once in the preceding session he had thought himself under the necessity of speaking very fully upon the subject; *but since that time he had never mentioned it either directly or indirectly; no man, therefore, could charge him with having provoked the conversation that had passed.* He should, however, give his opinion on particular principles of government in the future progress of the Quebec bill. He acquitted with much candour his right honourable friend of any personal offence to himself in the interruption he had lately experienced (April 15), in attempting to answer his recent panegyric on France: and he finished by saying, that, should he and his friend differ, he desired it to be recollected, that however dear he considered his friendship, there was something still dearer in his mind—the love of his country; neither was he stimulated to the part he should take by any connexion with people in office; for whatever they knew of his political sentiments, they had learned from him, not he from them.

Such was the precursor of the day of quarrel. Mr. Fox, we see, had given the challenge, and yet was dissatisfied that it should be accepted; while his friends, proceeding a point further, boldly declared their determination to interrupt any one who should advert to it. Mr. Burke's observations in reply are, as we see, expressed in the most conciliatory spirit, though firm; and the threat used made it more imperative upon him to resolve not to be bullied into silence. During the interval between this and the 6th of May, the same determination of calling him to order was repeatedly hinted in the opposition newspapers, and their abuse of him otherwise indicated something of premeditated hostility.

That the behaviour of this body to him in the whole of the business was unfair, hostile, and imprudent, if not meriting harsher names, has been generally agreed. That of Mr. Fox it is also difficult to explain. In treating of a new constitution for a colony which embraced English, and French, and American interests, it was perfectly in order for he himself to advert to, and to contrast, their respective constitutions with that of the one proposed; but it seemed strange that the same privilege should be denied to another member, of at least equal talents, and of the same party, because he drew a different conclusion. Why, it



was pertinently asked, should Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan have free license to extol the French revolution or constitution, when speaking upon the Quebec or any other bill, while to Mr. Burke, and Mr. Burke alone, the topic of France should be wholly forbidden? It formed also matter for surprise that the former gentleman should profess such warm admiration of the French revolution, when confessedly not one beneficial result had arisen from it to that country, or seemed likely to arise either to it or to any other. If this admiration were sincere, what are we to conclude of his political wisdom and prudence? If it were not, the inference is equally against his political honesty. It is no more than justice to him to state, however, that what he panegyriced in the gross, he condemned almost uniformly in the detail, and much more in private conversation than he could be brought to express in parliamentary debate. It is on record, likewise, that though on two occasions he applauded by name, and in the hearing of the whole House, the new French *Constitution*, as "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country," he afterwards, when pushed by Mr. Burke, explained away his meaning by saying that it applied to the Revolution,—not to the Constitution. His sentiments seemed, in fact, more than once doubtful and wavering as to the line of conduct it was most proper for him to pursue: it has been always believed that he was urged on by sinister influence, and an innate passion for popularity, to take that side which he did; and that, having irrecoverably lost Mr. Burke by going too far, he was obliged to go further in order to retain Mr. Sheridan, who, it is said, exacted an explicit declaration of his opinions on this head as the price of his continued exertions in Parliament. It has been asserted, and even by some of the Members who continued to adhere to him—that he would ultimately have been brought over to Burke's views, had not the precipitate separation of the latter affected his pride too keenly; for that after the publicity of the quarrel, if he should relinquish his opinions, even if wrong, in order to effect a reconciliation, it would look so much like weakness, as probably to lose him the lead in his party, if not in the public esteem. It is likewise pretty certain that Burke himself expected to have made a convert of him, even after that dissension. Yet to a distant observer, these sanguine conclusions were not at all probable. Mr. Fox perfectly knew, and the idea haunted his mind, that by joining administration he must become a secondary personage to Mr. Pitt, who could not be expected voluntarily to surrender a full half of that power which he enjoyed as a whole; while, on the other hand, by not accepting of office, but merely showing himself in Parliament to re-echo the voice of Ministry, or by seceding altogether from business, he equally ran the hazard of losing something of his public importance. There was the further con-



sideration whether even, if admitted to an equality of power, it was probable he and Mr. Pitt should agree in their general measures. A calculation of these chances, and perhaps a real belief, however erroneous, that he was serving the cause of liberty by remaining at the head of Opposition, determined him to keep his station. Far be it from the wish of the present writer to "lean upon the memory of a great man;" but bare justice to another equally great, and, in some respects, greater, requires that truth should be opposed to that multiplied, unwearied, and still-continued abuse and mis-representation applied to him in consequence of this schism.\*

An anecdote of this memorable evening, related by a Member who had adopted Mr. Fox's opinions, evinces, contrary to the inference he draws, that Mr. Burke, instead of displaying the calmness of one who had come down to the House prepared for a rupture, felt all the irritation which unpremeditated quarrels always produce, and the harsh reception he had experienced was so much calculated to excite.

"The most powerful feelings," says Mr. Curwen,† "were manifested on the adjournment of the House. Whilst I was waiting for my carriage Mr. Burke came up to me and requested, as the night was wet, I would set him down—I could not refuse—though I confess I felt a reluctance in complying. As soon as the carriage-door was shut, he complimented me on my being no friend to the revolutionary doctrines of the French, on which he spoke with great warmth for a few minutes, when he paused to afford me an opportunity of approving the view he had taken of those measures in the House. Former experience had taught me the consequences of differing from his opinions, yet at the moment I could not help feeling disinclined to disguise my sentiments. Mr. Burke, catching hold of the check-string, furiously exclaimed, 'You are one of these people! set me down!' With some difficulty I restrained him;—we had then reached Charing Cross—a silence ensued, which was preserved till we reached his house in Gerrard Street, when he hurried out of the carriage without speaking, and thus our intercourse ended."

It is to the credit of Mr. Burke, however, that when his own personal and political interests were at stake, he displayed nothing of this spirit of irritation, as the following anecdote, recorded by the same gentleman, testifies, and it is only one among many others:—"On the first question of the Regency I differed from Mr. Fox: when the division was proceeding, Mr. Burke espied me remaining in my seat; he turned about, and repeatedly called on me, but as I obeyed not the summons, a laugh at his expense

\* For a more detailed account of it, and of the circumstances by which it was preceded and accompanied (the only full and fair one indeed which exists), see Dodsley's Annual Register for 1791.

† Travels in Ireland, vol. ii.

ensued; though he was evidently displeased, I must do him the justice to say he did not resent it."

The House having adjourned till the 11th, Mr. Fox again explained away his opinions against aristocracy, which Mr. Pitt rather sarcastically said, he was glad to hear, for he and every one else had formed a different estimate of his meaning, from what had fallen from him the evening they had last assembled. Mr. Burke spoke at length on the question, and on the situation in which he stood with his party. Mr. Fox again assailed him with some censures and personalities, at the same time saying, that if he wished to return to his party, it would receive him, respect him, and love him as heretofore. Of this censure and invitation Mr. Burke, in a rejoinder, took scarcely any notice, neither did he utter a syllable of recrimination; so that in the whole of this affair the loss of temper would seem to have been quite as great in the former gentleman as in the latter.

It was not one of the least remarkable events of the period, that the very next measure which occupied the House of Commons was one brought forward by Mr. Fox, which, though daily in the habit of dropping hints upon inconsistency, seemed calculated to render his own more particularly marked, as in the late quarrel he had expressly alluded to difference of opinion with Mr. Burke on this very point—to whom, in fact, the present undertaking was a strong though unavowed acknowledgment of the superiority of his views at an early period of his political life, on a great constitutional matter. This measure was the bill for empowering juries to try the questions both of law and fact in prosecutions for libel.

It has been already noticed, that a bill for this purpose was introduced by Mr. Dowdeswell, in January 1771, in consequence of the discussions which arose from the verdict of the Jury in Almon's trial for publishing Junius's Letter to the King. This bill, Mr. Burke, as the moving spirit of his party, not only suggested but drew up with his own hand, and supported in the House by an able speech. Ministry however resisted it, and among others Mr. Fox pointedly. Lord Shelburne and his friends gave it a hollow support; Mr. George Grenville and his party scouted it, and Mr. Horne Tooke attacked it anonymously in the newspapers, though all these persons formed sections of Opposition—so much were the judgment and constitutional knowledge of Mr. Burke even then in advance of those of his ablest contemporaries. This ungracious reception probably prevented him from renewing it. Mr. Fox, at the present moment, seized upon the question as a useful prop to his falling popularity, and though it is an understood rule for one Member of Parliament, before he seizes upon the proposition of another, to communicate with him on the subject, Mr. Fox did not think this compliment necessary, although no breach had then (February) taken place between them: he said nothing to Mr. Burke, made no apology, acknowledged no obligation, but adopted



the spirit and substance, and, as nearly as possible, the words of the bill of 1771, as his own exclusive property.\* It is difficult to suppose he did not know who the real author was, though this may be possible; but the bill itself, from having opposed it, and from his late reference to it, he could not well have forgotten.

\* For the information of the reader the chief heads of each are subjoined.

#### Jury Bill of 1771.

I. Whereas doubts and controversies have arisen concerning the rights of Jurors to try the whole matter charged in indictments, and informations for seditious and other libels; for settling and clearing the same in time to come, be it enacted, &c. that from and after, &c., the jurors who shall be duly impanelled and sworn to try the issue between the King and the defendant, upon any indictment or information for a seditious libel, or a libel under any other denomination or description, shall, to all intents and purposes, be held and reputed, in law and in right, competent to try every part of the matter laid or charged in the said indictment or information, comprehending the criminal intention of the defendant, and evil tendency of the libel charged, as well as the mere fact of the publication thereof; and the application by inuendo of blanks, initial letters, pictures, and other devices, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

II. Provided that nothing in the act be construed to prevent or restrain the judges or justices before whom such issues shall be tried, from instructing the jurors concerning the law upon the matter so in issue, as fully as may be done in other misdemeanors, where the jurors do and ought to try the whole matter; nor to restrain the jurors from finding the matter special, if the law to them shall seem difficult and doubtful.

III. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to take from the defendant, after verdict found, the right of laying such evidence before the Court in which such verdict was found, as may tend to mitigation or extenuation of his said offence, as has been usually practised before this act.

#### Jury Bill of 1791.

I. Whereas doubts have arisen, whether on the trial of an indictment or information for the making or publishing any libel, where an issue or issues are joined between the King and the defendant or defendants, on the plea of not guilty pleaded, it be competent to the jury impanelled to try the same, to give their verdict upon the whole matter in issue; be it therefore declared and enacted, &c. &c., that on every such trial, the jury sworn to try the issue may give a general verdict of guilty or not guilty upon the whole matter put in issue upon such indictment or information, and shall not be required or directed by the Court or Judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, to find the defendant or defendants guilty, merely on the proof of the publication by such defendant or defendants, of the paper charged to be a libel, and of the sense ascribed to the same on such indictment or information.

II. Provided always, that on every such trial the court or judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, shall, according to their or his discretion, give their or his opinion of directions to the jury on the matter in issue between the King and the defendant or defendants, in like manner as in other criminal cases.

III. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to prevent the jury from finding a special verdict in their discretion, as in other criminal cases.

IV. Provided also, that in case the jury shall find the defendant or defendants guilty, it shall and may be lawful for the said defendant or defendants to move in arrest of judgment on such ground and in such manner as by law he or they might have done before the passing of this act, any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.



Whatever merit, therefore, be in this celebrated measure, and there is unquestionably much, the larger proportion of it, beyond all doubt, belongs to Mr. Burke.

His labours at the commencement of this troubled session had been equally arduous, though less personally agitating than those which occurred towards its close. An important constitutional question was mooted, whether the impeachment had not abated by the dissolution of Parliament in 1790? He maintained, with great vigour and ability, that it did not; Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, Mr. Addington the Speaker, Mr. Adam, and the chief talent of both Houses, supporting the same views. Nearly all the lawyers, however, were of an opposite opinion, and among them Mr. Erskine, who laboured hard to support this unconstitutional doctrine. This circumstance drew from the chief manager many sarcastic remarks, especially after Mr. Erskine, who had been professionally retained in a cause on the other side, and who of course was not free from bias on the question, had remarked that they were not *at home* in that House, when Mr. Burke said, he believed they were not; "they were birds of a different feather, and only perched in that House on their flight to another—only resting their tender pinions there for a while, yet ever fluttering to be gone to the region of coronets; like the Hibernian in the ship, they cared not how soon she foundered, because they were only passengers—their best bower anchor was always cast in the House of Lords." In another sentence he expressed a wish "to see the country governed by law, but not by lawyers." On the 14th of February, when Mr. Erskine, who had already sustained many of his biting sarcasms, complained of the length of the trial, Mr. Burke, after an able defence of the managers, upon whom certainly no blame rested in the opinions both of Ministry and Opposition, asked "whether the learned gentleman remembered, that if the trial had continued three years, the oppressions had continued for 20 years? whether, after all, there were hour-glasses for measuring the grievances of mankind? or whether those whose ideas never travelled beyond a *nisi prius* cause, were better calculated to ascertain what ought to be the length of an impeachment, than a rabbit who breeds six times in a year was to judge of the time proper for the gestation of an elephant?" Mr. Fox was equally severe in his strictures upon the legal profession.

The other chief public measures in which Mr. Burke took part were, by an eloquent speech, seconded by Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, in support of Mr. Mitford's bill, granting indulgence to protesting Roman Catholic Dissenters, or those who denied the Pope's supremacy in temporal matters; on the slave trade; on the Russian armament; and a very eloquent one (May 12th) on Mr. Grey's motion for a committee to inquire into the effects of imprisonment for debt—a practice to which his humane propensities were at all times keenly alive; and the legislature of the present day by pass-

ing the Insolvent Act seems to have adopted the spirit of his ideas.

“They had, he said, not only their prisons full, but they had a commonwealth of debtors, a commonwealth of prisoners; a commonwealth as numerous as many that had existed in ancient history. These prisoners were not distinguished from slaves, but actually were slaves, existing in a country valuing itself on its laws, and boasting of its freedom, but in which they endured a greater portion of slavery than ever had been exercised by the most despotic powers. It certainly was a blemish in our law that it produced all the effects of the most abject slavery. It was a paradox strange and irreconcilable. One thing he wished to suggest, which was, that it was not to be held that this business was in all cases connected with commerce. The contracting of debts often happened among the lower classes of men in the common transactions of life, and were deemed civil suits founded on false credit. Commerce was too cautious to act upon such a fallacious principle; in cases of commerce the creditor only wished to secure the *cessio bonorum*. Not only the trading part of the community, therefore, but every man in the kingdom was deeply interested in the inquiry.”

In the early part of the summer he paid a visit to Margate, for the benefit of the warm salt-water baths for Mrs. Burke, whence an anecdote is related indicative of his strict sense of propriety in the performance of religious duties. At church, one day, he was unexpectedly saluted with a political sermon, which, though complimentary to his own views of public affairs, was so little suited in his opinion to the place, that he displayed unequivocal symptoms of disapprobation by rising frequently during its continuance, taking his hat as if to depart, and re-seating himself with an air of evident chagrin. “Surely,” said he, on another occasion, “the church is a place where one day’s truce may be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind.”

During the stay of the family here, his niece, Miss French, who had come from Ireland to reside with them, was accustomed to relate a little incident of the ingenuity and knowledge of small things possessed by her uncle, being unexpectedly put to the test. A ball being to take place at the rooms, the ladies, who had been little in public in consequence of Mrs. Burke’s indisposition, became anxious to ascertain the prevailing colours and modes in that then very fashionable place of resort, but were sadly puzzled to find a fit messenger to dispatch upon this important errand. Mr. Burke overhearing the conversation, immediately removed the difficulty by jocularly offering himself as *Embassador extraordinary* on the occasion, and when he found that much merriment was excited by the proposal, and some remarks made upon his unfitness for a mission requiring a special knowledge of caps, dresses, flounces, tuckers, and all the paraphernalia of female dress, good-humouredly replied, “Come, come, I know more of these things than you give me credit for; my knowledge must not be undervalued until



it is tried." To the rooms accordingly he went duly instructed by the ladies, made his remarks, according to his instructions, and returned with a humorous, and, as it proved, very correct account of all he had observed.

Toward the end of August Sir Joshua Reynolds published a print of him, engraved by Benedetti, from the best portrait painted by himself in 1775; underneath it the president caused to be engraved the following lines from the fifth book of *Paradise Lost*—the conduct of the good Abdiel; a strong allusion, it will be perceived, to the recent political quarrel, and expressive of his own sense of the proceedings of Opposition, as well as of their treatment, on that occasion, of his friend:—

"So spake the fervent Angel, but his zeal  
None seconded, as out of season judged,  
Or singular and rash \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ unmoved,

Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;  
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;  
Nor number nor example with him wrought  
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind  
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed  
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd  
Superior, nor of violence fear'd aught;  
And with retorted scorn his back he turn'd  
On those proud towers to swift destruction doom'd "

Mr. Burke, whose humility was as distinguished as any other of his qualities, and who did not see the plate until a considerable number of impressions had been worked off, urged the strongest remonstrances against the application of such lines to him; and insisted, almost as the condition of continued friendship, that they should be obliterated, or the plate and all the impressions from it which had not been distributed, destroyed. Sir Joshua submitted to this determination of his friend with great reluctance, and it was so unrelentingly carried into effect that very few are now to be found. So far did Mr. Burke carry this feeling, squeamish or affected as some may consider it, that whenever he met with one of these prints in the house of a friend, he used to beg it as a particular favour, in exchange for one without the lines, and it was no sooner obtained than destroyed.

At this period also it may be remarked, that the war of caricatures which had been carried on against him for many years with some wit and address, as well as against Mr. Fox and others of the Opposition, now turned in some degree in his favour. The Jesuit's dress, by which and by his spectacles he had hitherto been commonly represented was omitted, and he was afterwards chiefly drawn as confounding or exposing in debate the apologists of the Revolution. A collection of these graphic though fleeting memorials of the whims or satire of the day, made by an admirer of Mr. Burke and an acquaintance of



the writer, affords some amusing scenes at this period of time ; the likenesses preserved in them are as faithful as caricature pretends to be, and some of his oratorical attitudes are very correctly caught.

This pictorial wit, however, even when most hostile to him, far from inflicting pain, frequently became a source of amusement to himself and his friends, as the following anecdote will testify. Some years since, when dining at Lord Tankerville's, the conversation turning on caricatures, a gentleman remarked, that he believed Mr. Fox had been oftener exhibited in that way than any other man in the kingdom—"I beg pardon," said Mr. Burke, "but I think I may put in my claim to a greater number and variety of exhibitions in that line than my honourable friend." "I hope," observed Mr. Fox, "they give you no uneasiness." "Not in the least," was the reply, "I have, I believe, seen them all, laughed at them all, and pretty well remember them all ; and if you feel inclined to be amused, and it would not be trespassing on the indulgence of the company, I can repeat the different characters in which I have figured in the shops, obedient to the mimic powers of the pencil." Accordingly he began, and detailed them all in so humorous a manner as to keep the table in continual laughter during his description.

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## CHAPTER XII.

Anecdote of Burke's unobtrusive spirit—Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs—French Emigrants—Letter to Mr. (now Baron) Smith—Writings on French Affairs, and on the Roman Catholic Claims—Sir Joshua Reynolds—Parliamentary Business—Letter on the Death of Mr. Shackleton—War with France—Letter of Mr. R. Burke, Jun. to Mr. Smith.

ALLUSIONS having been made in this work to that unobtrusive spirit, which, whether called humility or modesty, constantly actuated Mr. Burke in restraining his partial and admiring friends from giving to the world through the customary channels, those biographical notices and domestic details and anecdotes so well calculated to exhibit him in an amiable light, and many of which are necessarily lost, an instance of the fact may be given, though it occurred some time before the period at which we are now arrived.

One of these friends, the very oldest and one of the very warmest he possessed, finding his name to occupy so frequently and so highly a large share of the public attention, conceived it might gratify general curiosity, and pay a debt at once to eminent merit and long friendship, by communicating more at large a few of those personal and domestic circumstances which impart

the only true knowledge of character, and which his opportunities for observation enabled him very well to supply. This was accordingly done, and inserted in a newspaper of the day. Here the piece met the eye of the orator, and though no more than justice had been rendered by it to the characters of himself, his lady, and family in the way of eulogy, the circumstance caused him no small degree of annoyance, and even unusual irritation. Suspecting the quarter whence it proceeded, by the information it contained, he instantly wrote to the presumed author, reprehending him most severely for taking the unwarrantable liberty of intruding what he termed his "bed and board" upon the public eye—of impertinently meddling with what the world had no concern whatever—of doing that which the pen of malice and faction however busy with his political character, had never dared to touch—and for this unjustifiable officiousness in the garb of praise, renouncing almost in positive terms, any further acquaintance or correspondence.

Surprised, and beyond measure hurt, at a result so little to be anticipated, the unlucky friend returned a dejected, though pathetic and extremely well-written reply, confessing his offence, urging that though perhaps open to the charge of officiousness, he could not divine that so venial an error should excite so much displeasure; that in doing as he did, he had no other motive than to evince the sincere love and honest admiration for his talents and character which had ever been the ruling passions of his breast—and if for this cause he was to be deprived of the honour of his future correspondence and regard, a regard springing up from their most boyish days, and never yet for a moment interrupted, he should regret it as the heaviest misfortune of his life, but if the determination was finally taken as the tenor of his letter seemed to imply, he bade him sorrowfully indeed and unwillingly on his part, a long, but an affectionate and respectful farewell. This appeal completely subdued Burke. He wrote off instantly a letter of apology much more humble in its terms than that of his friend, deprecating the loss of his regard, desiring to recall his hasty and improper communication, and to bury in oblivion its harsh tone, and sincerely begging his forgiveness for displaying towards him even for a moment that constitutional irritability, which he so well knew was a failing of his nature, but which he should take care should never again be permitted to interfere with their long and he hoped unfailling friendship.

His early and esteemed acquaintance, Mr. Shackleton, of Balitore, who visited London very frequently in the spring, to attend the annual meetings of the Friends' Society, spent a considerable portion of his time either at Butler's Court or at the house of the family in town, and when business or other claims upon his time carried him elsewhere, Mr. Burke always regretted

the disappointment. The following is one of his notes to him, written in the early part of this year.

“ My dear Shackleton,

“ I shall be most happy to see you. My wife will be in town on this day ; at least I hope so. Why can't you dine with us also ? I have refused two invitations this morning to keep myself for you,

“ Yours, most truly,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Friday.”

A few days after the rupture with Mr. Fox, a paragraph having appeared in the Morning Chronicle,\* stating that the great body of the Whig party having decided on the late dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke in favour of the purer tenets of the former, the latter was in consequence to retire from Parliament. This sentence of ejection from his seat, though wholly gratuitous, and if not meant as a slight to him, probably intended to mislead the public mind on the unanimity of the party, only reiterated a declaration which he had some time before made, of intending to retire from the House of Commons whenever the impeachment should terminate. As a trick, therefore, it was unworthy of his notice. But the intimation conveyed in the first portion of the paragraph relative to the purer Whiggism of the member for Westminster, being re-echoed in and out of Parliament by persons attached to him, an answer became necessary in the opinion of his antagonist, in order to test what Whig principles really were, by comparing those avowed by Mr. Fox and his friends with those maintained at the revolution, the era of their supposed greatest purity.

For this purpose appeared towards the end of the summer, “ An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.” In this pamphlet, which is couched in a very calm tone, and written in the third person, he successfully accomplishes his purpose of proving that his doctrines were in perfect coincidence with the allowed standard of correctness, and that from these he had not swerved. He defends his conduct in the whole of the recent dispute, with a moderation of manner and a statement of circumstances, simple and undeniable in themselves, which perhaps preclude any sufficient answer being given to him. He maintains his consistency as one of the most valuable parts of his public character, and retraces the general complexion of his exertions, as well as the

\* May 12, 1791—“ The great and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, have decided on the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke ; and the former is declared to have maintained the pure doctrines by which they are bound together, and upon which they have invariably acted. The consequence is that Mr. Burke retires from Parliament.”



very words made use of on several important occasions, in order to prove their perfect conformity with those advanced in that work (the Reflections) which the party had taken so much pains to condemn. The chief reasons for writing it are given briefly but forcibly, and among them are the following:

“He proposed to prove that the present state of things in France is not a transient evil, productive, as some have too favourably represented it, of a lasting good, but that the present evil is only the means of producing future and (if that were possible) worse evils. That it is not an undigested, imperfect, and crude scheme of liberty, which may gradually be mellowed and ripened into an orderly and social freedom, but that it is so fundamentally wrong as to be utterly incapable of correcting itself by any length of time, or of being formed into any mode of polity of which a member of the House of Commons could publicly declare his approbation.” The decisive boldness of this and many similar predictions and their subsequent exact fulfilment, will often astonish the reader in the writings of this extraordinary man.

As an exemplification of his power to assume any style which suited the whim or the necessity of the moment, the present pamphlet is not unworthy of notice. It resembles most nearly the “Short Account of a late short Administration;” the one a statement of facts illustrative of the career of a ministry, the other explanatory of his own; and both so different from his impassioned style of writing as to present scarcely a feature of resemblance.

Few things affected his sensibility more about this period, and indeed for some time before, than the hordes of emigrants driven from opulence and respectability in their native country, to poverty and obscurity in this, by means of the secret menace or open violence of the sanguinary characters who exercised the municipal authority in a large portion of France. For the relief of the poorer class, besides giving as much in the way of relief as his own means permitted, he exerted all his influence by raising private subscriptions among his friends, by appeals to the public,\* and afterwards

\* The following plain and dispassionate appeal to public liberality in favour of the distressed body of French Clergy, drawn up by Mr. Burke, and distributed in September, 1792, produced a handsome subscription; it is given here on account of not appearing in any other volume connected with him.

“It is well known that a cruel and inhuman persecution is now and hath for some time past been carried on by a faction of atheists, infidels, and other persons of evil principles and dispositions, calling themselves philosophers, against our brethren the Christians of France. In this persecution, a vast multitude of persons of all ages, sexes, and conditions, and particularly the clergy, have suffered in a grievous manner. Many of them have been, with circumstances of great barbarity and outrage, put to death, and their bodies, according to the customs lately prevalent in France, treated with savage indignities.

“Several women, of whom some were of rank, dedicated to religion, in the peculiar exercise of a sublime charity, by an attendance on the sick in hospitals, have been stripped naked, and in public barbarously scourged. Thousands of other respectable religious women, mostly engaged in the education of persons of their own

by applications to government. To others of higher rank, his house and table were open until a more permanent residence could be procured for them; and in performing this work of christian beneficence and charity it ought to be mentioned to his honour, that some of the pecuniary difficulties with which he had to struggle, were incurred. A modern writer (C. Butler, Esq.) gives the following account of one of the almost daily levees of Mr. Burke, to these unfortunate persons, at which he was present:—

“Some time in the month of August, 1791, the Reminiscent called on that great man, and found him, as he usually was at this time, surrounded by many of the French nobility, and haranguing with great eloquence on the horrors of the French revolution, and the general ruin with which it threatened every state in Europe. One of his hearers interrupted him by saying, with somewhat more of levity than suited either the seriousness of the subject, or the earnestness with which Mr. Burke was expressing himself—

sex, and other laudable occupations, have been deprived of their estates, and expelled from their houses, in which they had purchased a property by the portions given to them by their parents. These respectable women are many of them far advanced in years, and labouring under great infirmities; the major part are at, or near, the declining period of life, and all are utterly inconvertant in the affairs of the world, and in the means of procuring themselves any subsistence. They, by whose charity they scantily subsisted, under every species of insult, vexation, and oppression, before their expulsion from their houses by the philosophic faction, are now, for the most part, themselves obliged to fly their country, or are reduced to almost an equal degree of penury with those they had been accustomed to relieve.

“Many thousand of the parochial clergy, after having been driven from their livings and houses, and robbed of their legal property, have been deprived of the wretched pensions which had been by public faith stipulated to be paid to them when that robbery and expulsion were ordered; and have been exposed to perish by famine. Others, in very great numbers, have been arbitrarily thrown into unwholesome prisons, and kept there a long time without any redress, against all law, and against the direct orders of the supreme magistrate of their new constitution, whose duty it was to see that no illegal punishment should be executed. At length, after a tedious imprisonment, (suffered with a mildness, a patience, and a constancy which have not been denied by their very persecutors, whose rage and malice, however, these examples of Christian virtue have failed in the least degree to mitigate,) the municipal bodies, or the factious clubs who appoint and guide them, have by their proper authority transported into a foreign kingdom a considerable number of these prisoners in slave ships. At the same time, all the rest of the clergy, who by lying hid, or flying from place to place, have hitherto escaped confinement; and endeavoured in private to worship God according to their consciences, and the ancient fundamental laws of their country, are hunted out like wild beasts; and a decree of the National Assembly itself has now ordered them, in terms the most insulting and atrocious ever used by a public assembly, to quit the kingdom within 15 days, without the least preparation and provision, or, together with those imprisoned, and yet not exiled, to be instantly transported to the most wild, uncultivated, and pestiferous part of the whole globe; that is to Guiana, in South America.

“All this has been done without calling upon one single person of the many thousands subject to this severe and iniquitous sentence, as well as to all the cruel preceding oppressions, to answer any specified offence or charge whatsoever. Several of the said clergy, some of whom are aged and infirm persons, to avoid imprisonment and the other various vexations above-mentioned, and in many cases to prevent the commission of further crimes, in the destruction of their respective flocks for their attachment to their pastors, have been obliged to fly their country, and to take refuge in the British dominions, where their general exemplary behaviour has greatly added to the compassion excited by their unmerited sufferings. \* \* \* \* \*



“Mais enfin, Monsieur, quand est-ce que nous retournerons dans la France?” “Jamais”—was Mr. Burke’s answer.—It was a word of woe: he pronounced it in a very impressive manner, and it evidently appalled the whole audience.

“After a short silence, during which his mind appeared to be labouring with something too big for utterance—“Messieurs,” he exclaimed, “les fausses esperances ne sont pas une monnoie, que j’ai dans mon tiroir :—dans la France vous ne retournerez jamais.” “Quoi donc,” cried one of the audience, “ces coquins!” “Coquins!” said Mr. Burke, “ils sont coquins; mais ils sont les coquins les plus terribles que le monde a connu!”—“It is most strange,” he then said in the English language—“I fear I am the only person in France or England, who is aware of the extent of the danger with which we are threatened.” “But,” said the Reminiscent, wishing to prolong the very interesting conversation, “the Duke of Brunswick is to set all right.”—“The Duke of Brunswick!” exclaimed Mr. Burke—“the Duke of Brunswick to do any good!

“It is confidently hoped that a difference in religious persuasion will not shut the hearts of the English public against their suffering brethren, the christians of France; but that all true sons of the church of England, all true subjects of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who are not ashamed, in this time of apostacy or prevarication, to confess their obedience to, and imitation of their divine master in their charity to their suffering brethren of all denominations—it is hoped, that all persons who from the inbred sentiments of a generous nature cultivate the virtues of humanity—it is hoped, that all persons attached to the cause of religious and civil liberty as it is connected with law and order—it is hoped, that all these will be gratified in having an opportunity of contributing to the support of these worthy sufferers in the cause of honour, virtue, loyalty, and religion.” (Mention is then made of the subscriptions for the people of Lisbon, after the earthquake, and that for the French prisoners of war, in 1761.)

“We trust that such of our countrymen as were then alive are still mindful of their former virtue; and that the generation which has succeeded is emulous of the good actions of their ancestors. The gentlemen for whom this subscription is proposed, have never been guilty of any evil design against us. They have fled for refuge to this sanctuary. They are here under the sacred protection of hospitality.—Englishmen who cherish the virtue of hospitality, and who do not wish an hard and scanty construction of its laws, will not think it enough that such guests are in safety from the violence of their own countrymen, while they perish from our neglect.

“These respectable sufferers are much greater objects of compassion than soldiers and mariners, men professionally formed to hardships, and the vicissitudes of life—our sufferers are men of peaceful, studious, uniform habits; in a course of life entered into upon prospects and provisions held out by the laws, and by all men reputed certain. Perhaps of all persons in the world, they had the least reason to look for imprisonment, exile, and famine. Englishmen will not argue crime from misfortune. They will have an awful feeling of the uncertain nature of all human prosperity. These men had their establishments too; they were protected by laws; they were endowed with revenues. They had houses, they had estates. And it is but the other day that these very persons distributed alms in their own country, for whom, in their extreme necessities, alms are now requested in a foreign land.” (The Bishop of St. Pol de Leon is proposed to distribute the subscription, as best acquainted with the wants and claims of the sufferers; and a postscript is added.)—“Since the drawing up of this case, many hundreds of the clergy have been massacred at Paris, with the venerable Archbishop of Arles, a prelate, the greatest ornament of the Gallican Church, in virtue and knowledge, and four other eminent and worthy bishops at their head. Some bishops, and a considerable number of the inferior clergy are arrived, and are daily and almost hourly arriving, since that horrible slaughter.”



A war of posts to subdue France!"—Another silence.—"Ce qui me désespère de plus," he then said—"est que quand je plâne dans l'hémisphère politique je ne vois guères une tête ministerielle à la hauteur des circonstances."

Among his other visitors from France about this time was the famous Madame de Genlis, who, with her chamberlain and suite took up their abode for a short time at Butler's Court, and of whom the following anecdotes were current in the family. The chamberlain, almost as soon as he had secured a footing in the house, communicated that Madame la Comtesse could not sleep if the least portion of light gained admission into her bed-room. The darkest was therefore appropriated to her, but this would not do; the shutters were fitted afresh to exclude the intrusive morning, but in vain; thick window-curtains were superadded, to no purpose; dense bed-curtains closely drawn to boot, but all ineffectually, for the *peste* light was, or was said to be, still visible.—A carpenter was at length added to the establishment of the mansion, whose business it was every evening to nail up blankets against every crevice by which it was possible for a ray of light to enter, and in the morning to remove them—and this remedy, happily for the peace of the house and the slumbers of the lady, proved effectual.

Madame, however, did not prove so great a favourite with some of the friends of her distinguished host as was expected. Her great ambition or failing was to do, or to be thought to do, every thing; to possess a universal genius both in mind and in mechanical powers, beyond the attainments of her own, or even of the other sex. A ring which she wore of very curious, indeed exquisite workmanship, having attracted the notice of Sir Joshua Reynolds while she remained at Butler's Court, he inquired by what good fortune it had come into her possession, and received for answer that it was executed by herself.—Sir Joshua stared, but made no reply. "I have done with her,"—said he the first time he was alone with Mr. Burke afterwards—"to have the assurance to tell *me* such a tale! Why, my dear Sir, it is an antique;—no living artist in Europe can equal it."

One of the most pleasing results derived to Mr. Burke from his literary and parliamentary exertions against the wild politics of the day, was the reasonable train of thought which they tended to excite or to confirm in young men of superior talents and station in life, and in those who were intended for the liberal professions, of whom some might in time be expected to possess authority in the state, and thus through his instrumentality become the future safeguards of the constitution. His disciples indeed soon became numerous, in effect and substance at least if not in name. From several of those who are now the chief ornaments of both Houses of Parliament, he received testimonies of respect and admiration, such as were gratifying to age to receive, and honourable to youth to pay.

Among others of this class was Mr. William Smith,\* son of Sir Michael Smith, Bart., Master of the Rolls in Ireland, who, educated at Christ Church, Oxford, learned there to estimate at their due value the merits of his illustrious countryman. To fight therefore under his banners became almost a matter of course. Though very young, he had not suffered himself to be misled by those illusive speculations promulgated under the name of liberty, and so well calculated to impose upon youth; and though a man of genius, he did not deem it necessary to display that fashion of it which waywardly runs counter to the opinions of the aged, the observant, and the wise of his own time. Possessing a spirit too active to remain neuter or idle in the conflict then raging with what were considered republican principles, he enlisted as an author militant against them, and as the forerunner of those eminent talents which have raised him to his present distinguished station in his native country, produced several pieces which attracted considerable notice. One of these, "The Rights of Citizens," he dedicated to Mr. Burke. Its main object was to insist upon what, in the enthusiasm of the moment, seemed to have been almost forgotten, the stability and value of men's social and civil rights, as contradistinguished from those precarious and fantastic ones which Paine had been contending for under the specious title of Rights of Man. The idea was well-timed; for something seemed requisite to sober men down from the heated contemplation of that which it was impracticable to grant or useless and in fact pernicious if attained, to a juster estimate of the substantial good which they already enjoyed. In return for the dedication, the ingenious writer received the following characteristic and admirable letter, forwarded to him at Spa, whither he had then proceeded, which in more than one respect is well worthy the attention of the reader.—

"Sir,

"By some neglect at my house in town, I have been deprived, till this morning, of the satisfaction of reading your book. The use I have made of my morning has convinced me how much I have suffered by that neglect and its consequent delay.

"I have run over too rapidly your book: but in that rapid view, I am able to estimate the value of the honour which has been done me, by inscribing to my name the work of so agreeable a writer, and so deep a thinker, as well as so acute and distinguishing a reasoner. Your work is, indeed, a very satisfactory refutation of that specious folly of the Rights of Man; and I am not a little proud that I have had the good fortune (as you will see sometime or other) to coincide with some of your ideas, in a piece which is just

\* Now the Hon. Sir William Cusack Smith, Bart., F.R.S., Second Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland.



printed, but not yet published.\* The points in which we happen to coincide, you have certainly handled much more fully and much better. I have only touched upon them. It was not my plan to go deeply into the abstract subject; because it was rather my desire to defend myself against the extraordinary attacks of some of my late political friends, than formally to set about the refutation of what you very properly call visions;—indeed they may be called delirious, feverish ravings. To refute such things, required a capacity for such deep and large views of society and human affairs, as you have shown.—But the more clearly you refute them, the less you are comprehended by those whose distempered reason you would cure.

“The discharge of peccant matter must have its course; and will continue as long, I am afraid, as the disease from whence it proceeds has matter to feed it:—I mean the ambition of certain descriptions of men, to distract that society, in which, though they are not without their proper share of attention, they think they do not possess all the importance to which they are entitled.

“You talk of *Paine* with more respect than he deserves. He is utterly incapable of comprehending his subject. He has not even a moderate portion of learning of any kind. He has learned the *instrumental* part of literature; a *style*, and a method of disposing of his ideas; without having ever made a previous preparation of study, or thinking, for the use of it. *Junius*, and other sharply-penned libels of our time, have furnished a stock to the adventurers in composition, which gives what they write an air, (and but an air,) of art and skill; † but as to the rest, Paine possesses nothing more than what a man whose audacity makes him careless of logical consequences, and his total want of honor and morality makes indifferent as to political consequences, can very easily write.

“They indeed, who seriously write upon a principle of leveling, ought to be answered by the magistrate, and not by the speculatist. The people whom they would corrupt, and who are very corruptible, can readily comprehend what flatters their vices, and falls in with their ignorance; but that process of reasoning which would show to the poorest how much his poverty is comparative riches, in his state of subordination, to what it would be in such an equality as is recommended to him, is above his comprehension, even if it were pleasing to his pride, because it involves in it a long and laboured analysis of society. If he will not receive it on authority, he is incapable of receiving it at all; and where a man is incapable of receiving a benefit through his

\* This was the “Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs,” in which, for the purpose of comparing former opinions with those broached by the apologists of the revolution, or at least the results to which they led, he had quoted passages from Paine.

† This passage has always appeared to Sir William Smith a decisive refutation of the conjecture that the Letters of *Junius* were written by Mr. Burke. It will have, no doubt, much weight in the list of contra-indicants.



reason, he must be made to receive it through his fears. Here the magistrate must stand in the place of the professor: they who cannot, or will not, be taught, must be coerced.

“ With more of your approbation than I can presume to lay any claim to, I meet some of your censure, which I perhaps better deserve. You think that my way of treating these subjects is too much in the concrete; (*here the manuscript is too much blotted to be legible*)—too large a share of circumstances, feelings, &c. &c. However, I console myself in this, because I think, before you have done, you condemn the abstract mode as much as I do; and I am the less ashamed of being in the wrong when I am in such very good company. But surely you forget that I was throwing out reflections on a political event, and not reading a lecture upon the origin and principles of government. How I should treat such a subject is not for me to say; for I never had that intention. The event itself too was of a very mixed nature.

“ On all this, however, I hope I shall have the pleasure of conversing with you more fully at Beaconsfield, on your return, if you should go to the continent as early as you intend; but I hope something may keep you in London till I can get to town. I shall be ambitious of improving the acquaintance with which you flatter me.

“ I have the honour to be, with great respect and many thanks,  
Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ To William Smith, Esq.,” &c. &c.

“ The foregoing letter was written while the “ Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs ” was at press. On the return of Mr. Smith, then a very young man, from the continent, a few months afterward, he made his first visit to Butler’s Court, and was, for the first time, introduced to the personal acquaintance of its distinguished owner.

“ There was company in the house at the time, and when he arrived from town they had already sat down to dinner. He entered the dining-room, in some measure unobserved, but found a seat at the foot of the table beside Mr. Richard Burke the younger, whose premature death, in no very long time after, plunged his father into such deep affliction; and between whom and Mr. Smith nearer advances to intimacy were made during the evening than the short period of their acquaintance might give room to expect. This would seem to disprove an assertion sometimes made by persons who saw him but little, or whom he might not possibly like, that his habits to a stranger were so reserved as to present an obstacle to intimacy.

“ The guests present were rather numerous. Among them were M. Cazales, a distinguished member of the first National Assembly of France, and, unless the writer’s memory deceives

him, a Vicomte, previous to the abolition of titles; and M. Dillon, reputed a favourite of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette of France, and commonly known by the appellation 'Le Beau Dillon.' These, at least the former more particularly, appeared to speak, or even to understand English, very imperfectly. Mr. Burke, consequently, addressed much of his conversation to them in French; he did not seem to pronounce it or speak it well, but was perfectly able to express himself intelligibly, and with reasonable fluency; and this was manifestly all that he aimed at. He appeared not merely above the vanity of attempting to make a display of proficiency, but also above the more excusable feeling of reluctance to betray his want of it. The revolutionary events which were then crowding upon the scene, seemed very much to engross him, and naturally formed a considerable portion of his conversation.

"During dinner, a servant whispered to him the arrival of Mr. Smith, on which he rose from the head of the table where he had been sitting, walked down to the latter, shook hands with and welcomed him, and then returned to his seat. In the manner in which this was done, there appeared to the writer of these recollections, a mixture of something resembling formality, (or should it be called *vieille-cour* stateliness?) with hospitable feeling and frank good nature, of which he would not find it easy to convey a just idea to the reader.

"When the ladies appeared about to quit the room, Mr. Burke stopped them, and went out himself. On his return, in a minute or two, they retired. He had in the mean time, it appeared, been examining the degree of heat of their drawing-room, where thermometers were placed for the purpose of ascertaining the temperature with precision. Mrs. Burke was then in a delicate state of health, labouring, as the writer apprehends, under a complaint of the rheumatic kind; and this was the cause of the affectionate and attentive precaution observed by her husband.

"Richard Burke, the brother of Edmund, and Recorder of Bristol, formed one of the company, and appeared to be a person of pleasantry, humour, and ready wit. The younger Richard, who, however, was not in very good health, seemed, if not diffident or reserved, at least disinclined to take part in the general conversation, and rather disposed to confine his communications to those more immediately about him, and to deliver his sentiments in an under tone of voice. The share of his conversation which he gave to Mr. Smith was considerable; and in its purport as well as quality, extremely gratifying to the latter. His health appeared delicate; a cold, to all appearance, had taken fast hold of him, and fixed upon his chest. Both his father and mother betrayed anxiety on this subject, and might be said to have spoken *at* him, with reference to his declared intention of going next day to London. The weather, his cough, the little inconvenience which



would arise from postponing for a few days his interview with Mr. Pitt, were in turn adverted to. He appeared to the writer to cut these parental anxieties and recommendations too short, by the at once careless and peremptory way in which he said, 'I shall go, however;' and in some time after, he suggested to one of the ladies the necessity of her having her commissions for town ready that night, as he purposed to start early in the morning.

"In the course of the evening, after the gentlemen had adjourned to the drawing-room, M. Cazales made, in his attempts to express himself in English, more and greater blunders than the writer could have expected. Some of these mistakes he conceives himself to recollect; but, as they would be more *vrais* than *vraisemblables*, he thinks it as well not to record them. He seemed to have a desire to amuse and to excite laughter, and he succeeded.\* Mr. Burke contributed an occasional smile to the general merriment, and nothing more; and even this was accompanied by a curl of the lip, that appeared to doubt whether there was much good taste, whatever there might be of good humour, shown in the proceeding.

"Mr. Smith remained for a few days at the house of this eminent man, and repeated his visit more than once afterwards. So great a portion of time, however, has since elapsed, that he has doubtless forgotten much which deserved to be remembered, and all of which he would desire to remember, could those bright, but flitting thoughts and sentiments, which make up the charm of conversation with a great genius, be always held fast by the memory, or transfixed at once to paper. Some of the particular occasions also, on which a part of what he still retains may have occurred, are, in part, forgotten.

"During one of these visits, a morning was devoted by Mr. Burke to walking round the grounds and vicinity with his visitor, discoursing with him upon agricultural subjects, evincing not only much apparent interest in, but as is well known to his friends, displaying much practical knowledge of such matters. He talked likewise of Ireland, and seemed to think of it, and to recall the scenes of his early life with some tenderness of feeling. He pointed out the mansion which had belonged to the family of

\* M. Cazales, who was a good-humoured man, with all the inclination to please and to be pleased, which is often characteristic of his country, had picked up the air, and some of the words of the strange and not very intelligible or elegant old song called "*Peas upon a trencher!*" The words seemed to tickle his imagination, but not knowing them perfectly, he asked Mr. Smith to give them to him accurately. This that gentleman was unable to do, but, to the credit of his promptitude and ingenuity, wrote the following hasty paraphrase, or version, with a pencil on the back of a letter, both supplied by his amusing French friend: they answer the air very well—

"Gargon apportez moi, moi,  
Des pois, de petits pois, pois;  
Sucrés Monsieur?—C'est mieux, je crois;  
Et l'assiette de bois, bois"      EDITOR.



Penn; and either showed a house traditionally represented as having been inhabited by the poet Waller, or pointed at the church as containing his remains.\*

“ On the profession of the law, which Mr. Smith contemplated, Mr. Burke made a variety of observations. So far, he said, as his experience led to the forming of an opinion, he considered it as not calculated to develop the general, or higher powers of the mind,—an idea which he has likewise thrown out in the speech on American taxation, when sketching the character of Mr. George Grenville. He sought to illustrate this view of the matter by some instances which it might be invidious, and does not seem necessary, to record.

“ At the same time he did not seem wholly wedded to his theory;—said that very possibly it was an erroneous one; that even were it correct, there were several splendid exceptions to the rule, and that even in cases to which the rule applied, the pursuits and studies of the bar might sharpen the understanding on many points, and did, in fact, render its professors, as far as they permitted their faculties to expand, acute and penetrating. It assisted likewise to give some degree of logical precision to the mode of thinking; but the general effect, after all, was to reduce the mind from a wholesale to a retail dealer, in subordinate and petty topics of information. He added, that he understood the members of the Irish bar to be inferior in legal learning to their English brethren, but in other respects to possess some advantages. It is apprehended that a material change in this respect has since taken place; that the Irish bar may now compete with that of England in legal information; and that on the other hand, the former can no longer lay claim to superiority over the latter, on other grounds.

“ It appeared to Mr. Smith, that there was nothing arrogant, peremptory, or dogmatical in the way in which Mr. Burke put forward his opinions, though such charges have been sometimes adduced against his mode of argumentation. Mr. Smith submitted a short tract to his perusal. Mr. Burke objected to the theory which a paragraph in it implied. The former immediately proposed, in deference to such authority, to draw his pen across it, but was stopped by Mr. Burke, who said, ‘ Do not strike it out until I turn the matter more in my mind.’ Next day he made a few changes and interlineations in the manuscript, and said, that thus qualified, the theories of the paragraph might stand. These scenes occurred in the study at Butler’s Court.

“ Imperfect as these recollections may be deemed, and thrown together as they are with more haste than the writer could have desired, though prevented by momentary circumstances from devoting more time to their detail and arrangement, they may not be

\* Waller’s house still exists in the neighbourhood.

wholly without interest to those who delight in contemplating the great character to whom they relate.

“ — Lamented sage ! whose prescient scan,  
Pierced through foul anarchy's gigantic plan,  
Prompt to incred'lous hearers to disclose  
The guilt of France, and Europe's world of woes—  
Thou on whose name each distant age shall gaze,  
The mighty sea-mark of these troubled days ;  
Oh ! large of soul, of genius unconfin'd,  
Born to delight, instruct, improve mankind.”\*

In December, Mr. Burke, keeping his eye steadily fixed on the progress of the Revolution, as the great centre of interest to a statesman, drew up a paper, entitled, “ Thoughts on French Affairs,” which was submitted to the private consideration of Ministry, and is marked by the same spirit of fore-knowledge as his other writings on the subject. He arrives at three conclusions, of which subsequent experience has taught us the truth—that no counter-revolution in France was to be expected from internal causes only; that the longer the system existed it would become stronger both within and without; and that while it did exist, it would be the interest of the rulers there to disturb and distract all other governments.

The communication made to him from the Empress of Russia, through Count de Woronzow and Mr. Fawkener the British Minister, and already alluded to, produced in return a dignified and complimentary letter, dated from Beaconsfield, November the 1st, insinuating forcibly the necessity for her majesty adopting, by active exertion as well as by declaration, the cause of all Sovereigns, all churches, all nobility, and all society; that the debt due by her predecessors to Europe for civilizing a vast empire, should now be repaid by that empire to rescue Europe from the new barbarism. An air of doubt, however, pervades this letter, as if he had some suspicion of her zeal in the cause; and, if so, the result proved he did not mistake her character, as she did nothing, and probably never meant to do any thing, against the revolutionary faction. Catherine, who possessed many of the qualities of a great Monarch, was nevertheless the most selfish of politicians; to crime and selfishness, in fact, she owed her crown; and feeling that no danger to it existed among her own subjects where the first elements of freedom were unknown, she had not generosity enough to step forward and assist others in distress when there appeared no prospect of immediate profit from the exertion. The purpose of her communication to Mr. Burke, was probably to extract from him a letter of admiration and praise, being always ambitious of the notice of the great literary names of Europe; but in returning the courtesy due to a Sovereign and a female, it may be questioned whether he did not inflict some

\* Recollections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke.

violence on his inclination. Of her private character there could be but one opinion. To the general politics of her court, as evinced towards Turkey and Poland, he was no greater friend, particularly in the business of the partition of the latter, of which he avowed that honest detestation which every man, not a profligate politician, or a robber by profession, must ever entertain.

The grievances of the Irish Catholics exciting increased discussion and dissatisfaction in that country, he was solicited to state and support their claims to the English Ministry, for relaxation of the penal laws. His son also was appointed their agent, and early in January 1792, proceeded to Ireland to influence their proceedings by such moderate counsels as might give effect to his father's exertions here. He carried with him from his fond parent, the following letter to Lord Charlemont :

“ Beaconsfield, Dec. 29, 1791.

“ My dear Lord,

“ I have seldom been more vexed than when I found that a visit of mere formality had deprived me of the substantial satisfaction which Mrs. Burke and my brother had in seeing you, as well as they had ever remembered you. Many things, at that time, had contributed to make that loss very great to me. Your Lordship is very good in lamenting the difference which politics had made between Mr. Fox and me. Your condolence was truly kind; for my loss has been truly great in the cessation of the partiality of a man of his wonderful abilities and amiable dispositions. Your Lordship is a little angry at politics that can dissolve friendships. If it should please God to lend me a little longer life, they will not, I hope, cause me to lose the few friends I have left; for I have left all politics I think, for ever.\* Every thing that remains of my relation to the public, will be only in my good wishes, which are warm and sincere, that this constitution should be thoroughly understood, for then I am sure it will be sincerely loved; that its benefits may be widely extended, and lastingly continued; and that no man may have an excuse to wish it to have another fortune than I pray it may long flourish in. I am sure that your country, in whose prosperity I include the most valuable interest of this, will have reason to look back on what you have done for it with gratitude, and will have reason to think the continuance of your health for her further service, amongst the greatest advantages she is likely to expect.

Here is my son, who will deliver this to you. He will be indemnified for what I have lost. I think I may speak for this my other and better self, that he loves you almost as much as I do.”

\* This idea was frequently expressed by Mr. Burke, and for the moment he might possibly intend it; but, in reality, his mind was too active and too intent on such topics, to lie dormant whenever an important question presented itself for exercising his capacious understanding, and great political knowledge.



Shortly before this, Mr. Burke had commenced writing his celebrated "Letter to *Sir Hercules Langrishe, Bart., M.P.*" as auxiliary to his son's mission in favour of the Catholic claims. It bears date January 3rd, 1792, enforces the policy of removing the chief restrictions to which they were subject, particularly that which denied them the elective franchise, and appeals to the recollection of his friend whether his opinions upon the question were not as fully matured and as strongly expressed thirty-two years before (1760) as at that moment. So successful were his exertions, aided in part by those of other friends, that a bill was speedily introduced into the Irish Parliament by which the profession of the law, hitherto interdicted to Roman Catholics, became open to them; intermarriages with Protestants legalized; restraints upon their education, and the petty obstruction to arts and manufactures shown in limiting the number of apprentices to masters of that persuasion, removed; and next year (1793) they gained the elective franchise.

It has been often the fate of political leaders of Ireland, not to have their designs approved, or perhaps fully comprehended, by persons of the same class in England, either from some radical difference of opinion or conduct, or from the opposite views which the immediate seat of government, and a dependency of such government, may deem it their interest to entertain. On this occasion they were not more fortunate than on others. Young Burke, though from various causes of prepossession, inclined to take the most favourable view of their leading men at that time, found something in their conduct not to his taste. He had some reasons perhaps for being fastidious. To moderation, good sense, and sterling talents, he united a firmness and rectitude of character which led him to augur ill of a country where what he considered contrary qualities prevailed among some of her chief people, as the following extract of a letter to Mr. (now Baron) Smith, written soon afterwards, pretty plainly evinces—

"Upon this principle, as far as my little sphere extends, I shall act, because I think the time requires it. The great disorder of this country (Ireland) seems to me to consist in the complication of its politics; and I observe a very dangerous fluctuation and unsteadiness in the opinions and conduct of most of its public men. In these circumstances it seems to me to be every man's duty to give a determination to his own principles and conduct, which if every man does, some order will soon rise out of the present chaos. For one I mean to do so; which induces me the rather to desire your favourable interpretation, if I cannot obtain your active co-operation."

In the spring of the year (23rd February) died Sir Joshua Reynolds, one of the most valued friends of the subject of this memoir, bequeathing him, in return for the trouble of executorship, the sum of 2,000*l.* and also cancelling a bond for the same.

amount. This proof of regard was a legacy paid to thirty-five years of close and uninterrupted intimacy, in which most of their friendships, many of their sentiments and feelings were the same. A rumour has pretty generally prevailed that the President was indebted to the pen of Mr. Burke for the substance of his celebrated Lectures on Painting; but of this there is no proof, not even that he corrected them, though this common act of friendship is not improbable. There is, however, little doubt of the artist having profited much by the society, and by those unpremeditated, yet often brilliant effusions of an original and vigorous mind, frequently thrown out by the orator upon art as well as upon general subjects, traces of which have been found in the lectures by some of those staunch literary pointers whom nothing in the shape of coincidence escapes, though after all they do not detract, in any material degree, from the painter's merit. "What the illustrious Scipio was to Lelius," says Mr. Malone, "the all-knowing and all-accomplished Burke was to Reynolds." A passage in one of Barry's letters informs us of the uses to which an able artist in the higher walk of his profession could put the overflowings of such an intellect, scattered around as they were with a profusion which rendered the recollection of his own offspring scarcely probable: but it is only a superior mind perhaps that can make such use of another superior mind. —Writing from Rome he says—"It is impossible to describe to you what an advantage I had in the acquaintance of Mr. Burke; it was a preparative, and facilitated my relish for the beautiful things of the arts here: and I will affirm, from experience, that one gentleman of a literary turn and delicate feelings for the ideal, poetical, and expressive parts of the art, is likely to be of the greatest service to a young artist." Mr. Burke first suggested to Sir Joshua the well known picture of Ugolino; while in return he entertained so favourable an opinion of the painter's judgment and discrimination as a philosopher as to submit to him in manuscript the Reflections on the Revolution in France, to which he gave the highest praise. Mr. Burke directed the imposing ceremonial of his friend's funeral; but when at the conclusion of the day he attempted to return thanks in the council-room in the name of the family, to the Members of the Royal Academy for the attention shown to the remains of their late President, his feelings found vent only in tears, for, unable to utter a word, he was obliged to give up the attempt after several fruitless efforts.\*

A character of the deceased, drawn up for the newspapers a few hours after his death, was immediately attributed to Mr.

\* He became guardian to Miss Palmer, Sir Joshua's niece and heiress, who afterwards was Marchioness of Thomond. When the marriage articles were brought to be signed, Mr. Burke addressed her in an elegant and impressive speech applicable to her intended change of condition, which, however, agitated her so much as to render her utterly incapable of holding the pen. Every effort was made to calm her



Burke, and has been universally admired for that felicity of thought and elegance of diction rarely equalled by our finest writers, on their finest subjects, and which on a topic where he felt any interest, seems ever to have guided his pen. "It is," says the learned Seward, "the eulogium of Parrhasius pronounced by Pericles—it is the eulogium of the greatest painter by the most consummate orator of his time." Even a virulent enemy terms it "as fine a portrait as Reynolds ever painted."

"His illness was long, but borne with a mild and cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of any thing irritable or querulous, agreeably to the placid and even tenor of his whole life. He had, from the beginning of his malady, a distinct view of his dissolution; and he contemplated it with that entire composure, which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow. In this situation he had every consolation from family tenderness, which his own kindness to his family had indeed well deserved.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the great masters of the renowned ages. In portrait he went beyond them; for he communicated to that department of the art in which English artists are the most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity derived from the higher branches, which even those who professed them in a superior manner did not always preserve when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention of history and of the amenity of landscape. In painting portraits he appears not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. His paintings illustrate his lessons, and his lessons seem to have been derived from his paintings. He possessed the theory as perfectly as the practice of his art. To be such a painter, he was a profound and penetrating philosopher.

"In full happiness of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinizing eye in any part of his conduct or discourse.

"His talents of every kind—powerful from nature, and not meanly cultivated by letters—his social virtues in all the relations

in order to procure the signature, but in vain; all his soothing powers were exerted endearingly and perseveringly without effect; and the party separated for the time unable to accomplish the purpose of their meeting.



and in all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of agreeable societies, which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to provoke some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow.

“Hail! and farewell!”

The legacy bequeathed by Sir Joshua was not a solitary instance of the regard entertained for Mr. Burke by his friends. Dr. Brocklesby accidentally hearing he was pressed by some temporary difficulty, delicately observed that as a slight token of remembrance he had put down his name in his will for £1000, but on considering there would be more pleasure in becoming his own executor, he had resolved to anticipate time and to pay the money immediately; and it was paid accordingly.

The question of the Slave Trade being discussed in April, Mr. Burke forwarded to Mr. Dundas a “Sketch of a Negro Code,” which he had drawn up in 1780, when, as he observes, the abolition, however much to be desired, seeming altogether chimerical on account of the strong party opposed to it, he aimed at carrying into effect the next best remedies he could devise—that of subjecting the trade to the strictest possible regulations, and by legislative enactments ameliorating the condition of the slaves in, and to be brought into, the islands. On this project, much inquiry, consideration, and labour were expended; it is not a mere draught of a common act of Parliament, but an extensive system, coherent in its parts and bearings, and does honour to the benignant spirit of its author, ever active in the service of suffering humanity.

During this session of Parliament he exerted himself less than on most former occasions, being now, he said, a worn-out veteran in the service, desirous himself to retire, and only coming forward now and then as veterans are accustomed to do, when the garrison of the constitution is exposed to open attack. A measure which he considered of this nature was the notice of a motion by Mr. Grey (30th April, 1792), for Parliamentary Reform, brought forward at the instigation of persons who had taken that measure under their special protection and assuming the title of “Friends of the People.” This association, counting among its members many persons of consequence in and out of Parliament, and daily increased by the junction of merchants and professional and literary men throughout the country, he stigmatized as of a dangerous tendency. “The object at which they aimed,” he said, “was little better; the motives of many concerned in it were doubtless innocent, but the way they went to work was as decidedly wrong; the sense of the people had not been in the least declared on the measure; no specific

grievance had been pointed out, no specific remedy assigned, and without these were explicitly set forth, there might be innovation attempted, but it would not be reformation. Suppose a design of this nature to be partially begun, did any member of the society who gave himself the trouble to think at all, imagine it would stop there, or that it would be possible to control its progress? Our House of Commons, as a body, might not be pure, no more than any individual member of it was wholly pure from sin, frailty, vice, or folly of some description or another; yet it was constituted perhaps as well as it could be, as well, in the main, as human nature would permit it to be. At any rate, while he could raise a voice or an arm to prevent it, it should never assimilate to the National Assembly. In that body, there were 700 members, 400 of whom were lawyers, 300 of no description that he could name, and out of the whole, he believed there were not a dozen who possessed in any one way a hundred pounds per annum. Such might be the perfection of representation in the eyes of some, nay, he understood it to be the opinion of many of the new sect in politics, but he trusted to the good sense of the people of England never to permit such a mob, nor any thing resembling it, to usurp the sacred office of their legislature."

The next important question in which he took part was on the motion of Mr. Fox, May 11th, to repeal certain statutes, bearing upon the Unitarian body, from whom that gentleman had presented a petition to that effect three days before. An outline of this clever speech seemingly drawn up *after* its delivery, as it alludes to some points advanced in the debate, appears in his Works.\* He opposed their claims on the ground of their being the avowed enemies of the church. They had lately accused themselves of a disgraceful timidity with respect to the concealment of their sentiments, and now they were to atone for that timidity by an extraordinary boldness. They had openly declared their hostility to the establishment. They had confessed their determination to propagate their doctrines. They were avowedly a society for the propagation of opinions immediately hostile to our church—they had incorporated for that purpose—they had published pamphlets with that view—they had raised a large fund to be employed in that service—they had entered into a solemn compact to obtain that end—and it was well known that Dr. Priestley was their patriarch. He went on to urge that from their new lights in theology, and their new lights in politics, which latter had been, if possible, more ostentatiously and offensively proclaimed than the former, they did not present any sufficient claim to the favourable consideration of the House. The motion was lost by 142 to 63.

\* Burke's Works, vol. x.



The proclamation issued some time afterwards against seditious writings and doctrines elicited strong symptoms of that difference of opinion among the great body of the Opposition, which it was evident must soon lead to a disjunction of interests; the *old* Whigs, or the Duke of Portland's friends, wholly disagreeing on most topics of the day with the *new*, or the followers of Mr. Fox. A nominal union indeed still existed between them in the House. But the dangers of the country becoming daily more apparent, and the predictions of their more ancient ally and leader, Mr. Burke, being day after day verified, impressed a gradual and general belief in that connexion, of the greater prudence and patriotism of following his opinions.

In the mean time, some whim or ill-humour of the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, inducing him to oppose in the House of Lords certain measures of Mr. Pitt, the latter found it necessary to procure his dismissal from office, intimating soon afterwards a desire for a junction with the Portland party; and as, in such a season of apprehension, it was desirable to bring all the talents of the country into its service, he did not object to include Mr. Fox among the number. The latter arrangement was particularly pressed upon the minister by Mr. Burke, who also pressed the policy of acceding to it upon Mr. Fox through indirect channels; and the fact is honourable to his candour, his patriotism, and even his friendship; yet as another specimen of the spirit of party malevolence, he was frequently accused at the moment while thus employed of being that gentleman's personal enemy. Mr. Fox, however, refused to accede to the proposition unless Mr. Pitt resigned the head of the Treasury, when they might better treat upon terms of perfect equality and enter the Cabinet as new men—a piece of humility not justly to be expected from the minister, or perhaps from any other man holding the same situation. The negotiation consequently for the present proved fruitless; but the Prince of Wales seeing the necessity for a decided avowal of his opinions in a season of such peril, came forward with a manly declaration in favour of the conduct of ministers; and his intercourse with Mr. Fox ceased for several years.

All the threatening symptoms of the spring increased during the summer of 1792, by the unprecedented circulation of incendiary pamphlets; by the communication of the clubs of London with those of Paris, though this happily had the effect of inducing several members of Opposition to secede from such questionable meetings; and by the formation of affiliated societies through many of the country towns and even villages, openly advocating Republicanism. In Paris, anarchy, proceeding in its usual course, became at length open massacre, followed by the dethronement of the King, the institution of a republic, and encouraged by the repulse of the Duke of Brunswick from the



frontier, adding a paternal invitation to all other countries to pursue the example.

In November Mr. Burke, while at Bath, drew up another important State paper, "*Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs*," distinguished by the same profound sagacity as the others, and sent copies of it to the King, to the Ministers, and to the chief members of the Portland party, as he had done with the "Thoughts" of the preceding year. Its aim is to point out that war, however it may be pushed off for the moment, is inevitable; that nothing can be done conjointly or singly by Austria and Prussia, or any other continental power, with effect against France, excepting they have other aid; "that there never was, nor is, nor ever will be, nor ever can be," any decided impression made upon her of which England is not the directing power, the soul of the confederacy; with what truth time has shown.

He urges as part of his reasons for asserting there must be war (in opposition to Mr. Pitt, who shortly before said there would be none), that whatever might be the form of the internal government of France, it had been always our policy to watch over her external proceedings; and that now, having conquered Savoy, penetrated into the heart of Germany, menaced an invasion of the Netherlands, completely overawed the Helvetic body, and sent a fleet into the Mediterranean to do the same to Italy, we could no longer view these things with indifference. "Spain," he says, "*is not a substantive power*; she must lean on France or on England; and it is as much for the interest of Great Britain to prevent the predominancy of a French interest in that kingdom, as if Spain were a province of the crown of Great Britain, or a state actually dependent on it; full as much so as ever Portugal was expected to be." Pursuing the subject, he distinctly points out, what was so truly verified by the event, her ultimate subserviency to France, if great pains were not taken by England to prevent it. In conclusion, he offers many severe comments on the wretched plan and conduct of the invasion of France by the Duke of Brunswick. The whole paper thrown off without finish, or participation in the knowledge of official secrets, displays the reflective discrimination of a great statesman, as correctly as if they were all under his eye.

His labours, in fact, connected with the great convulsion in that country, were almost beyond belief, as well in thinking, in writing, in debating, in corresponding upon it with many of the chief persons in Britain and in Europe, in imparting information, and in unwearied diligence in procuring it. For the latter purpose principally, he had dispatched his son the preceding year, with the knowledge of government, to the French princes and others assembled at Coblenz, who on his return brought with

him to England the famous M. Cazales, a man of superior talents, distinguished in the National Assembly as the chief opponent of Mirabeau, but who, like most other persons of common sense and common honesty, found it necessary soon after to consult his safety in emigration; and who was further remarkable for bearing so great a resemblance to Mr. Fox as to have been mistaken for him two or three times in the streets of London.\* By means of his son, on this trip, Mr. Burke also opened a communication with some of the ministers of the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, particularly the former, suggesting hints for quieting the disorders of the Netherlands and of Hungary, and alluding to those of France. Some additional communications, written and verbal, said to have been made by him to Lord Grenville on the latter fertile theme, have never been made public; but his suggestions, of whatever nature, were probably not adopted, his views differing materially on many points from those of persons in office.

His further views at this time are stated in the following extract of a letter to his son in Dublin,—“I am now in town trying to take my little part in measures which may quiet the unhappy divisions of the country, and enable us to make head against the common enemy of the human race. To do any good, there ought to be a general cessation, as much as may be, of all public and private animosities; and first the R——l f——y ought, in my firm opinion, in this question of the very existence of monarchy, as a basis, to be reconciled within itself; the next is, that the Opposition should be reconciled to the Ministry; and that, for that purpose, its dissonant parts should be brought to some agreement, if possible—if not, that the well-intentioned should be separated from the contagion and distraction attendant upon an apparent connexion with those who, under the false colour of a common party, are as completely separated in views and in opinions as the most adverse and factious ever have been or can be: the last part of the plan is, that there should be a reconciliation between the Catholics and Protestants of Ireland.”—In all these plans he succeeded, but in the last the least; either because government could not or would not pursue the plan he had chalked out, on account probably of the scruples of the King, or perhaps the equally strong obstacles presented by the violent antipathies of the ruling party in Ireland to their Roman Catholic countrymen. Mr. Pitt, there is no possible doubt, felt some jea-

\* This gentleman subsequently spent much of his time at Butler's Court, and evinced warm admiration for the great talents and virtues of his host. An anecdote told of him on his first arrival in the house, used to be afterwards a source of laughter and amusement to himself. He had often heard of what he called *rost-bif* as a leading and indispensable dish to all Englishmen, but was so perfectly ignorant of what it meant that he took up a slice of toast at breakfast, paused for some time, and then inquired whether this was not the great staple of an-English stomach of which he had heard so much?



lousy of appearing to be too much guided by his advice, for fully aware of his energy and resources of mind on every subject, he fancied that, by adopting his suggestions, he should be only inviting a continuance of them, which might possibly bring him too much under the influence of so active a coadjutor. Yet had his advice been fully followed up by the Minister sanctioning the subsequent arrangements made by Earl Fitzwilliam, there is a general impression among the best informed men of that country, that the rebellion would not have taken place.

The first day of the Session, 1792-3, December 13th, brought him forward again, "not," he said, "as the defender of Opposition, or of Ministry, but of the country." Mr. Fox still not merely retained, but enforced with a warmth that astonished and confounded many of his most devoted admirers, his former opinions as to the quiet state of the country, the total absence of any spirit in it hostile to the Constitution or Government, and asserted that the alarm arose from the artful designs and practices of Ministers; moving an amendment to the address to this effect. On the report being brought up the following day, he again proposed an amendment to avert the calamities of war with France, by entering into negotiation with her rulers. This Mr. Burke replied to with great effect, urging that could war be avoided it were advisable, but he saw a spirit at work that would leave them no option—that he could not recognise a tittle of that peaceful spirit which those persons were stated to possess, who, without the formality of a public declaration, were as hostile to the government, property, and respectability of England as they well could be; who had received at the bar of their Convention as representatives of the English people, a few obscure and worthless men, deputed by obscure, mischievous societies; who had passed many decrees which were in effect declarations of war against every government, and who had declared their determination to retain their new conquests in the Netherlands, which it seemed to be the general sentiment in the House, and in the country, they must give up. Between the nations there was at that moment a moral war, which must soon become an actual war.

Uninfluenced by the results of these proposals, Mr. Fox, disregarding the general feeling of the country to the contrary, brought forward on the third day of this struggle (15th December), a motion for sending a Minister to Paris, to treat with the Provisional Government. To this likewise Mr. Burke opposed a negative; and took the opportunity of paying a handsome compliment to the discrimination, [good sense, and sound patriotism of the late Earl of Liverpool, who, he remarked, though young, did not permit his understanding to be warped by the infatuation of the day, but nobly stood forward to resist the growing evils. In him, and in the other promising young men, his friends, by whom he was accompanied, he was happy to find that the new doctrines would



find powerful opponents.\* He complained of being singled out for acrimony and invective whenever the French Revolution was mentioned, as if in the eyes of Opposition he had committed an inexcusable crime by attacking it. He defended Government from principle, not from interest—"For strange as it may appear (said he) to certain gentlemen who now think unfavourably of me; I affirm in the face of the House and of the country, that I retain, and ever will retain, my independence."

The sentiments uttered by Mr. Fox on these occasions, and the pertinacity with which the line of conduct dictated by them was pursued, gave much offence to many of the Opposition, who were either less personally attached to him than others, whose opinions had undergone a change, or who, like Burke, preferred the performance of a great public duty to any private consideration whatever. Among these was Lord Sheffield, who, from partiality to Mr. Fox, or from not perceiving at first to what his opinions tended, it will be remembered was a principal cause of the rupture with Mr. Burke; he now went so far as to say, that he was ashamed of *ever* having entertained any enthusiasm for the right honourable mover of such a measure as that now recommended. Others, if less strong, were not less explicit or loud in their terms of disapprobation.

While the opinions of Mr. Burke continued thus to gain ground, even in the camp of his opponents, an incident which occurred at this time turned their attention for a moment from his matter to his manner. A bill was introduced for the regulation of Aliens, in favour of which he made a long and able speech (28th December), on the principle that the ministers of a monarchy could not and ought not to have their hands tied behind them, while the emissaries of republicanism, regicide, and atheism, poured into their country with the design to destroy it, and yet be, by the weakness of the law, secure from control; and further, that war being probably at hand, he could not reconcile it to himself to give to the servants of the crown now a layer of support, and now a layer of opposition, but systematically to aid a measure which only formed part of a system of measures conscientiously meant to benefit the country by warning off it, and out of it, murderers and atheists; enemies to church and state; to religion and God; to morality and happiness.

\* The late Lord Erskine, who came frequently under his lash, experienced it again on the present occasion. "He was sorry he could not say the same of the learned gentleman whose speech they had just heard, who always instructed that House as the ancient philosophers did their pupils, by proposing himself as their example. Concerning the law, the constitution, or the government of France, the learned gentleman indeed had said nothing: he was right, for France had no law, no government, no constitution, and therefore he was very properly silent; but although the French had none, the learned gentleman had a great deal of law, a great deal of government of himself, and an excellent constitution. But being a general lover of new constitutions and enthusiastically fond of projectors, he was not surprised at his having undertaken to plead the cause of Citizen Paine."

In commenting upon a decree of the Convention, by which the system of fraternizing was indirectly to be propagated by the sword, he mentioned the circumstance of three thousand daggers having been bespoke at Birmingham, of which seventy had been delivered, and as a tangible illustration of his statement and argument, drew forth a concealed one, which he flung indignantly upon the floor of the House. "*This*," said he, pointing to the weapon, "is what you are to gain by an alliance with France; wherever their principles are introduced, their practice must follow: you must equally proscribe their tenets and their persons from our shores." His speech upon the occasion produced considerable effect upon the House. Whether this unusual peroration, so completely "suited the action to the word," was in such good taste, may admit of some doubt, though certainly well calculated, as he meant it should, to draw universal notice, and possibly to impress the most inconsiderate with a sense of the danger accruing from intercourse with the emissaries of the desperate faction which ruled France. On the other hand, his political opponents termed it a vile oratorical flourish, a theatrical pantomimic trick, unworthy of a great orator, who could by other and more legitimate means command the attention and sympathies of the House; but the vehemence of the censure it provoked, only proved, as his friends remarked, the effect it was believed likely to produce in the country.

The course of nature (as well as the unhappy politics of the time), was now exacting from him the hardest tax perhaps which age has to pay, that of seeing our friends gradually dropping into the grave around us, without our possessing that activity or elasticity of spirit necessary to form and cement new connexions. Shortly before this period, he had lost his early friend Mr. Shackleton, whose occasional visits and letters kept alive that ardour of affection with which the associates of our youth are regarded in every subsequent period of life, and never perhaps so tenderly as when from increasing infirmity their tenure of life becomes daily more precarious. To the letter of Mrs. Leadbeater, announcing the event, he wrote the following reply, dated September 8th, 1792:—

"My dear Madam,

"After some tears on the truly melancholy event of which your letter gives me the first account, I sit down to thank you for your very kind attention to me in a season of so much and so just sorrow to yourself. Certainly my loss is not so great as yours, who constantly enjoyed the advantage and satisfaction of the society of such a companion, such a friend, such an instructor, and such an example; yet I am penetrated with a very sincere affliction; for my loss is great too. I am declining or rather declined in life, and the loss of friends, at no time very reparable, is impossible to

be repaired at all in this advanced period. His annual visit had been for some years a source of satisfaction that I cannot easily express. He had kept up the fervour of youthful affections; and his vivacity and cheerfulness, which made his early days so pleasant, continued the same to the last: the strictness of his virtue and piety had nothing in it of morose or austere; and surely no life was better, and (it is a comfort for us to add) more happily spent than his. I knew him from the boyish days in which we began to love each other.

“ His talents were great, strong, and various: there was no art or science to which they were not sufficient in the contemplative life; nor any employment that they would not more than adequately fill in the active. Though his talents were not without that ambition which generally accompanies great natural endowments, it was kept under by great wisdom and temperance of mind; and though it was his opinion that the exercise of virtue was more easy, its nature more pure, and its means more certain in the walk he chose, yet in *that* the activity and energy which formed the character of his mind, were very visible. Apparently in a private path of life, his spirit was public. You know how tender a father he was to children worthy of him by their genius and their virtue; \* \* \* yet he extended himself more widely; and devoted a great part of his time to that society, of no mean extent, of which the order of the Divine Providence had made him a member. With a heart far from excluding others, he was entirely devoted to the benefit of that society, and had a zeal very uncommon for every thing which regarded its welfare and reputation; and when he retired, which he did wisely and in time, from the worthy occupation which he filled in a superior manner, his time and thoughts were given to that object. He sanctified his family benevolence, his benevolence to his society, and to his friends, and to mankind, with reference in all things to that Supreme Being, without which the best dispositions and the best teaching will make virtue, if it can be at all attained, uncertain, poor, hard, dry, cold, and comfortless.

“ Indeed we have had a loss. I console myself under it by going over the virtues of my old friend, of which I believe I am one of the earliest witnesses, and the most warm admirers and lovers. Believe me, this whole family who have adopted my interest in my excellent departed friend, are deeply touched with our common loss, and sympathize with you most sincerely. My son is just arrived in Dublin. My wife is not very well, and is preparing for a journey to Bath, which I trust will re-establish her. My brother, who will hear this news with a sorrow equal to mine, is now at Cheltenham for the benefit of the waters.—Compose yourself, my dear Madam, you have your work to do. \* \* \* Pray remember me to the gentleman I have not the honour of knowing, but whose happiness you make. Thank for me my



worthy friend Abraham for his good-natured letter, and beg him to consider it as answered in this. I hope you will assure my dear friend, Mrs. Shackleton, the worthy wife of my late invaluable friend, that we sympathize cordially in all she feels; and join our entreaties to yours that she will preserve to you as much as possible of the friend and parent you have lost."

Since the first edition of this work was printed off, a pamphlet has been published by Mr. R. Therry, which contains some letters written by Mr. Burke to his son, who had proceeded again to Ireland, on the business of the Roman Catholics early in September, 1792. They relate, of course, chiefly to their affairs, and evince his characteristic wisdom in the advice he offers, as to the means to be adopted for accomplishing their views. These admonitions differ in no respect from those still urged by the wisest, firmest, and most moderate friends of that body, though its leaders did not then, no more than they do now, follow the friendly recommendations thus given—A few passages from them, as possessing much interest at the present moment, may be quoted:—

"In those letters\* I gave you my ideas in general; particularly I pressed what I now press again; that those to whose cause we wish well in Ireland, would leave off the topic, of which some of them are so fond, that of attributing the continuance of their grievances to English interests or dispositions, to which they suppose the welfare of Ireland is sacrificed. I do not know whether they believe me or not; or whether they may not think, that I too speak from that sort of policy: but, believe what they will, there is not one story which the Protestant ascendancy tells of them that is more perfectly groundless than that notion. What interest has any individual here, or what interest has the whole kingdom collectively, that the Catholics of Ireland should have no share in the election of members of Parliament?† Since the independency, and even before, the jobs of that government are almost wholly in their own hands; the whole that England, or that Englishmen, get from it is a very trifle, not worth the consideration of any the smallest body of men; and if they think that the court party, or the ministerial party, or any party whatsoever on this side of the water, wish to keep down the Catholics, in order to keep the whole mass of Ireland feeble, they do an injury to the quietness of their character; at the same time infinitely too great an honour to the profundity of their politics. I have never known any of the successive governments, in my time, influenced by any passion relative to Ireland, than the wish that they should hear of it and its concerns as little as possible: for this reason, the present set of

\* Two, which had been previously forwarded to his son.

† This right, as has been already stated, was conceded to Roman Catholics in 1793, chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Burke.

ministers, who partake of that disposition in a larger measure than any of their predecessors with whom I have been acquainted, have left the whole to the persons to whom they have abandoned Ireland, and they again to — that junta of jobbers, who endeavour to secure to themselves lucrative repose against the faction who may oppose them there, or the rivals who may want to succeed them from hence — our friends are greatly, radically, and to themselves most dangerously mistaken, if they do not know that the whole of what they suffer is from cabals purely Irish.”—(Sept. 20, 1792.)

“As to your clients, in my opinion, as long as they keep themselves firm to the solid ground of the British constitution; they are safe for the present, and must be successful; but if they have any mistaken theorists to carry them into any thing like the principles adopted in France, they will not only be baffled, but baffled with shame.”—(Oct. 1, 1792.)

“I am glad to find I coincided in opinion with you. To petition the king is a right, and that word for word, as you conceive it; as to petition parliament in its present temper, would be foolish; this might be declared in some firm, modest, and temperate tone, more in the style of lamentation. What you say of the friendly Protestants is of more importance than all the rest, both, in my opinion, for the credit of their body, as for the advantage of your clients. I long much to talk to you on this subject. But it is more important that you should be where you are, so ’tis possible that the *bar* could be got to declare any thing useful in any tolerable numbers. Your adversaries are very busy every where, and have filled the mind of the people with the idea of a rebellion of the Roman Catholics ready to break out.”—(Oct. 17, 1792.)

“As to you, my dear Richard, be assured that in private conversations, in an affair of this difficulty and extent, you can do nothing. Reserve and coolness, and unwillingness to begin or continue discourses on the subject, and not too great a quickness to hear, give the enemy a better opinion of your discretion, and make them respect you more. Besides, by leaving them to themselves, they will be less heated with controversy, and disposed to think more dispassionately on the subject.

“Your mind you will open to your confidential friends in the Committee; there it is necessary; and that restraint, which is prudence with enemies, is treachery with friends. What degree of temperate and steady firmness you may find amongst them I know not. But every thing will depend on that combination, that is the combination of perseverance with coolness, and great choice in measures. You cannot too often inculcate to your chief friends, that this affair is of such a nature, that it cannot possibly be the work of a single day, or of a single act. The web has been too long weaving to be unravelled in an instant. No evils, but much good would happen were it so unravelled; but that is hardly to

be expected without some event which we cannot produce, and would not produce if we could, such as the American war, and its issue, which brought on ideas of Irish independence, and these again the necessity of conciliating the Catholics. This hastened their relief to the point in which it stands by many years. The petition to the king I hold an essential *preliminary* for any further application to parliament (whither to be sure you must come at last) until the mind of government and the public in both kingdoms is better prepared than it now is."—(December 10, 1792.)

"I am sure I do not pretend to know Ireland as well as they; but I think I know England as well as most people, or I have lived long to little purpose. The sentiments of this nation must finally decide the dispute between them and the jobbing ascendancy. If they are not sensible of it, their enemies are; and there is no degree of pains which they do not take to prejudice people here against them. \* \* \* \* \*

"They (the leaders of the Roman Catholics) think that the conduct of the Castle\* is the result of directions from hence; and that here they do nothing but plot some mischief against Ireland. Alas! I wish they could be got seriously and with a ruling spirit, to think of it at all. But things move in the reverse order from what they imagine. They think that ministry here instruct the Castle; and that the Castle sets the jobbing ascendancy in motion; whereas it is now wholly, and has ever since I remember, been for the greater part the direct contrary. The junta in Ireland entirely governs the Castle; the Castle, by its representations of the country, governs the ministry here; so that the whole evil has always originated, and does still originate amongst ourselves. I could enter further into this, but if they do not take my word for it, I am sorry for it. Many arguments would only weaken what I take to be an evident truth."—(Nov. 2, 1792.)

The war which he had so long predicted as inevitable was now at hand, precipitated perhaps by the opening of the Scheldt, by the promise of assistance from the National Convention to all people who should wish to throw off the tyranny of Kings, and particularly by the execution of Louis XVI. Mr. Burke, however, was not pleased with the assignment of the former motive, deeming it weak in comparison with some others.—"A war for the Scheldt!" exclaimed he in his forcible phraseology as soon as it was mentioned; "A war for a cham—r p—t!"—War at this moment however was no longer matter of choice with the ministry, being formally declared against England by the Republic on the 1st of February. The propriety and the necessity of it on our part, were already acknowledged by the old Whigs, who thus became separated by a distinct line of political feeling and conduct

\* The official residence in Dublin of the Lord Lieutenant, and consequently the seat of government.



from Mr. Fox, leaving him not only much reduced in numbers in Parliament, but greatly impaired in moral strength of character, and in political credit in the general opinion; for his remaining friends, though unquestionably men of talents, possessed not, in more than one sense, the confidence of the country.

It must always be matter of surprise to numbers, and of regret to many, how that eminent man could so perseveringly resist and condemn a measure which was in itself unavoidable, and which was supported by the general, and as it proved in the result the just, judgment of the country, or how he could have acted otherwise than Mr. Pitt did act, had he himself been Minister. It may be possible, however, that had Mr. Pitt led the Opposition, the spirit so inherent in political rivalry would have induced him to do just as Mr. Fox did; or in other words, that with the difference of men, the results to the country would have been precisely similar. In saying this no reflection is for a moment insinuated against the strict integrity of principle of either; but we are all, even the wisest and the best intentioned of men, the creatures of circumstances. It is therefore utterly impossible for the most conscientious statesman that ever lived, to view with the same degree of favour or through the same medium, measures originated by himself, or by those to whom he is politically opposed; or to estimate public affairs and measures by the same standard, whether he be in, or whether out of power. Had Mr. Fox been in office at this time, his views, his feelings, his prejudices, his judgment, would have certainly differed, with the difference of his public relations to the government; his anxieties would have been greater, and his apprehensions more easily excited; his penetration more sharp and sensitive by the very weight of his charge; he could scarcely have seen or heard, it may be said, with the same eyes and ears, as when at the head of the Opposition; and all this without any sacrifice of principle. The workings of the mind, arising from heavy responsibility, nearer views, better information, and more direct contact with the machinery of the state, and of the real rather than the ostensible grounds of its proceedings, are so imperceptible very often in their operation, that a statesman is often wound gradually round from the opinions he may have formerly entertained to others of a different description, almost without being aware of the change, and is sometimes surprised, and sometimes indignant, when told he is inconsistent with himself. This allowance ought to be made for all public men, though it is one which is generally denied them.

Mr. Pitt, it is perfectly certain, no more than Mr. Fox, had no great appetite for war. His glories had been hitherto peculiarly of the peaceful cast, his popularity was acquired in a state of prosperity and tranquillity. War might destroy, but was not likely to add to them. His interest therefore was to avoid hostilities; and so well did he know this and desire by all the means in his power

to accomplish it, that he could not be brought to believe what Mr. Burke had repeatedly told him almost constantly for two years before, that war must ultimately ensue. Far from precipitating that event therefore, he pushed it off until the very last moment, when, in fact, there was no alternative left him.

How Mr. Fox, placed in the same situation, could have avoided the storm, it is impossible to conjecture. He was above all state quackery, and never professed to have discovered any infallible nostrum by which to subject raging political madmen, whether at home or abroad, to the dominion of quiet and reason. He was, indeed, in many respects an easy man, a friendly man, an illustrious man, with great capacity of head, and much of the milk of human kindness in his heart, but the foreign race of revolutionists showed no particular attention to individual character except in cutting off the heads of those who enjoyed it, and there is no reason to believe that their disciples here would have been more merciful; a sentence which would have been pronounced the moment he interfered with any part of their system of confusion, having first, in order the more effectually to accomplish it, made him their dupe.

Admitting, however, that his vigilance on this point was greater than he avowed, it is not improbable that, as Minister at this moment, he might have parleyed a little longer with the Republic; he might have withheld some of our reasonable demands; he might have, for the forlorn hope of peace, overlooked slighter affronts; he might still have tolerated the revolution, and constitutional, and corresponding societies, and their innumerable affiliations; he might have submitted some time longer to daily importations of the emissaries and principles of anarchy; but as the demands on his patience rose, so even his concessions must have had an end. With all his partialities to popular license, he must have discovered to what these abuses of it tended. He could not have trifled with the quick discernment of the late King, (George III.) whose decision in moments of alarm has never, perhaps, been rated at its due value. He could not have resisted the deliberate conviction of his co-adjutors in office, and especially of the great Whig families, the supporters and partners of his fame for so many years; and least of all, could he have withstood, as Minister, the intuitive sagacity, the prophetic warnings so constantly fulfilled, the clear views, and conclusive reasonings of Mr. Burke; though as leader of Opposition his pride shrunk from acquiescing in any thing which implied tacit deference to the measures of Mr. Pitt. That war would therefore have ensued had even he been at the helm, it is impossible to doubt; that he would have conducted it differently, may be probable; that it would have been better conducted, is at best but matter of opinion. But there is some ground to fear that it might have been delayed until the enemy had gained more ground and more proselytes; until the situation of the allied

powers had become more precarious; until the throne and the constitution were beginning to totter under outrageous assaults; and consequently until our means of defence had been weakened.

When Mr. Pitt brought down the King's message regarding the declaration of war by France, and Mr. Fox on the following day (12th of February) moved an amendment to the address, weakening its force, Mr. Burke gave it, judging by the outline which remains of the speech, a triumphant reply. Touching on the singular care of Mr. Fox's friends, that not an idea, or a merit of any kind belonging to him, should be lost to the public, a peculiarity which strikes every reader of political history during his career, he turned this fact to account, on an observation made by Mr. Fox.

“The right honourable gentleman had complained bitterly of the misrepresentation of his expressions in that House. To him it appeared very extraordinary how a person of talents so clear, so powerful and so perspicuous could possibly be misunderstood—how a person who took so much pains by repetition, and going over the same grounds again and again, to bring his superior powers to the low level of the vulgar eye, could possibly be subject to misrepresentation—how a gentleman whose friends out of doors neglected no human art to display his talents to their utmost advantage, and to detail his speeches to the public in such a manner, that he, though a close observer of the right honorable gentleman, had never been able to recollect a single idea of his that had escaped the industrious attention of his friends, while those of a right honourable friend of his (Mr. Windham), whose abilities were equalled by his virtues, were so mangled and so confused in the reports that were made of them, as to be utterly unintelligible to the public.” \* \* \* \* “The right honourable gentleman had said that he hoped he was not reputed an advocate for France. To this he would say, that if the cause of France was an honest cause, it was justice to this country and to mankind, to undertake her defence. The true skill of an advocate was, to put forward the strong part of his client's case, and gloss over and hide the weak; to exhibit all its right in the brightest point of view, and palliate the wrong; when he could no longer palliate, to contrive that the punishment should be as slight as possible, or to bring his writ of error, and by every quirk evade it as well as he could; and no man possessed that power in a greater degree than the right honourable gentleman. To his speeches he always attended with admiration and respect. That which he had just heard he could not help estimating less highly, seeing that he had read every part of it in Brissot's speeches in the National Convention, one part only excepted, and that was the part in which the right honourable gentleman had asserted ‘that France had used every means to conciliate the regards and good will of Great Britain.’”

Adverting to the war, and his own opinion on that head for



some time past, he said—war was no common matter, no pastime for occupying the attention of a party, to be inconsiderately taken up or put down at pleasure. In a case of such importance to this country and to mankind as the present was, gentlemen should examine whether they had any sinister motive, as if they were in the divine presence, and act upon the pure result of such examination. He declared he had no hesitation to pronounce, as if before that presence, that Ministers had not precipitated the nation into war, but were brought into it by over-ruling necessity. “I possess as deep a sense of the severe inflictions of war as any man can possibly do.

“Trembling I touch it, but with honest zeal.”

“I always held it as one of the last of evils, and wish only to adopt it now from the conviction that at no distant period we shall be obliged to encounter it at a much greater disadvantage. For four years past it has grieved me to the soul, it has almost reduced me to death, when I observed how things were going on, and felt my utmost exertions unable to produce upon the government of the country, or in the public mind, a conviction of the danger that approached them. At length the infatuation was removed—Ministers awoke to the peril that awaited them ere it was too late.” \* \* \* “*He readily allowed that this was the most dangerous war we were ever engaged in; that we had to contend with a set of men now inured to warfare, and led on by enthusiasm and the ardour of conquest to such a degree that they bartered the arts, commerce, industry, manufactures, and civilization itself, for the sword.*” The latter passage is chiefly remarkable for exhibiting the wholly different view of the nature of the war which he entertained from the Minister, who now as for years afterwards, maintained that it was a war of little danger to ourselves, that it would not continue long, and the event be not at all doubtful.

Six days afterwards (February 18th) Mr. Fox brought forward five resolutions condemnatory of the war, and of the principles on which it was undertaken, which Mr. Burke again opposed with all his powers. At the conclusion of his speech, he presented the current doctrines of the day in a new aspect.—“Gentlemen,” he said, “who were so charmed with the lights of this new philosophy, might say that age had rendered his eyes too dim to perceive the glorious blaze. But old though he was, he saw well enough to distinguish that it was not the light of heaven, but the light of rotten wood and stinking fish—the gloomy sparkling of collected filth, corruption and putrefaction.

“So have I seen in larder dark,  
Of veal a sparkling loin,  
Replete with many a brilliant spark,  
As sage philosophers remark,  
At once both stink and shine.”

In the debate on Mr. Sheridan's motion, brought forward March 4th, relative to the existence of seditious practices said to prevail in the country, an altercation productive of some warm words arose between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, on a contradiction given by the former to some statements made by the latter, of which he said he had proofs in his possession, respecting the Princess Lamballe and M. Egalité (Duke of Orleans). To another insinuation made by Mr. Fox, that he himself was deserted by his party from their weariness of travelling so long in the barren track of opposition, Burke replied that "the new track through which he had called upon them to follow him was no common waste, but the barrenest of the barren—the deserts of Arabia. But if a caravan travelling through those deserts should find that their leader, from passion or obstinacy, had wandered from the right road, and that by following him they were in danger of being attacked by some plundering Sheik, they might be allowed to think a little of their own safety, and take measures for securing it.

"He could say for himself that he had deserted no party; and that of those with whom he had been accustomed to act, there was not one that differed from him in opinion on the present state of affairs, or disapproved of a single vote he had given in the course of the present session. *Those who had incidentally joined that party by the way, had no claim upon him.* As the right honourable gentleman had learned from Dr. Price the doctrine of cashiering kings, he presumed he would admit that leaders of parties, when they did wrong, might likewise be cashiered. If the leader should seem to consider the party as made only for him, instead of considering himself as but a part of it; if he should adopt a line of conduct without consent or consultation; if he should make speeches and motions as if he meant to say 'you dislike what I did to-day—I will do more to-morrow: if you disapprove of what I do to-morrow, worse awaits you the day after that,' it might then be supposed that the party was at liberty to leave him."

The Traitorous Correspondence bill (March 22d) produced two speeches from him in its support, in the first of which he denounced several of the clubs of France who had assailed his name with threats and obloquy. He also noticed part of a speech from a member of the National Convention, Citizen Lasource, who laments that—"The moment is not yet arrived in which may be seen at the bar of the revolutionary tribunal, that Orestes of the British Parliament, the madman Burke, that insolent Lord Grenville, or that plotter Pitt. But the moment is arrived in which the public have summoned them to the bar of their opinion. The moment is arrived in which they are consigned to the detestation of all nations whose execrations and

anathemas they so richly deserve—scourges of the earth, and vultures preying upon the vitals of the people, they have failed not to scatter their crimes and their gold to distract a nation which they despaired of being able to conquer \* \* \* \* \*. Soon shall they be laid prostrate before the altar of liberty, from which they shall rise only to mount the scaffold that awaits them, and to expiate by their deaths the evils in which they have involved the human race.”

The second speech (9th April) was exceedingly able and argumentative, by far the best delivered upon the occasion. Touching on the supposed injury to commerce, he said, “England was a commercial nation—so was every other, as far as it could. But if by commercial nation it was implied that commerce was her ultimate, her only end, he would deny it; her commerce was a subservient instrument to her greater interests, her security, her honour, and her religion. If the commercial spirit tended to break those, he insisted that it should be lowered.” \* \* \* \* \* “Let us not turn our every thing, the love of our country, our honour, our virtue, our religion, our security, to traffic—and estimate them by the scale of pecuniary or commercial reckoning. The nation that goes to that calculation destroys itself.” \* \* \* \* \* Supposing the case of an English contractor, dead to every principle but avarice, bargaining with the French, he fancied him recommending his goods in the following way. “Should our Sovereign, impelled by parental feelings for his people, hazard his august person, and take the field against you, behold, here is powder of the first quality, and here are bullets that will do his business. I do not cheat you; believe me they are good. Or should his children, stimulated by an hereditary thirst for glory, take the field, their avarice shall defeat their courage; those bullets and this bayonet shall go to their hearts, and Great Britain and her commerce be the gainer.”

On the 17th of June he came forward vigorously to oppose Mr. Fox’s motion for an address to His Majesty, for the re-establishment of peace with France. “Let us,” said he, “consider of the possibility of negociation. Supposing that England was to send an ambassador to the Sans-Culottes convention to make the *amende honorable*, in a white sheet at the bar of the meeting, and by way of approximating to their system of equality, confer that agreeable and honorable office on some nobleman of high rank, how were we sure that instead of a respectful reception he would not be saluted *a la mode de Santerre*, holding the bloody head of Louis XVI. as an example to all sovereigns ?

“Would you next have him to apply to the minister, Le Brun? Unfortunately the poor fellow is in gaol, and it may be very uncertain whether they would consent to grant him a day rule. Would you apply to the minister, Clavierre? You then would



have *non est inventus* returned upon the back of the writ, for it seems he is not to be found. Would you have recourse to Roland? Why, he is not only in gaol, but also his wife along with him, who is said to be the real minister. The wife too may be inaccessible: for as Roland is known to be uxorious, he is the more likely to be jealous, and would not, perhaps, readily admit the visit of your ambassador. Apply to Brissot, who has so many friends in this country, and let your ambassador take care he leaves his watch behind him. But alas! here again Brissot is likewise in gaol, bearing a repetition of that sort of misfortune to which it is hoped that habit has reconciled him. Pay your addresses to Egalité, and you will find him in his dungeon at Marseilles, sighing at the reflection of those hopes he once entertained of being lieutenant-general of the crown of France. There then only remains my celebrated friend, the mild and merciful Marat, whom a negociator might address with very excellent effect, if he carried credentials or recommendations from me. Such are the list of sovereigns who are to receive the submission and *amende honorable* of the British nation."

Since the open disunion of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox, some cessation of public intercourse, though none whatever of esteem or private friendship, had occurred between the former and the Duke of Portland, from an idea entertained by his grace that the latter would in time be brought round to form sounder opinions upon the great question in dispute, and, in the mean time, lest an impression of marked favour or partiality should interfere to prevent it, he desired to keep somewhat aloof from both gentlemen. The motive for this Mr. Burke perfectly understood, and did not disapprove, being as anxious as his grace to make a convert of his former friend. But daily occurrences rendering this event more and more improbable, less ceremony became necessary, in their intercourse, and during the summer the Burkes, father and son, accompanied the Duke to Oxford, on his formal installation as Chancellor of the University, the former having likewise attended a private ceremony of the same nature at Bulstrode, his Grace's seat, the preceding October. He was received by the heads of this seat of learning with all the marked respect and attention which his celebrity claimed at their hands, but it is said privately refused to be proposed for the honorary degree LL.D, which on a former occasion there had been some hesitation to grant. His son however, as well as Mr. Windham and others, received this mark of attention. He himself resided chiefly with Mr. Winstanley, Principal of Alban Hall, and Camden Professor of Ancient History, who was much impressed by the various knowledge and brilliancy of conversation of his guest, and of whose qualifications as a philologist he thus wrote soon afterward:—

"It would be indeed as useless as it would be presumptuous

in me to attempt to add to the reputation of Mr. Burke. Among the studies to which I have immediately applied, there is one which, from his attention to the more important concerns of active life, it might be supposed that he had overlooked: I mean that of ancient and modern languages. Those however who were acquainted with the universality of his information, will not be surprised to hear that it would have been exceedingly difficult to have met with a person who knew more of the philosophy, the history and filiation of languages, or of the principles of etymological deduction, than Mr. Burke." His society indeed proved a treat to all who possessed themselves, or who knew how to value in others, intellectual superiority: Gibbon, who had just arrived from Switzerland, after some years' absence, sought him out immediately, and writes at this time twice in his letters, "I spent a delightful day with Burke."

To his son, who had spent the earlier part of the year in Ireland, on the business of his mission in favour of the Roman Catholics, he began to address a letter on that important question, which, however, was never finished. A passage in it will be read at the present moment with some interest, and may give rise to some serious reflections, among those who take part in that great question.

"I am sorry to find that pride and passion, and that sort of zeal for religion which never shows any wonderful heat but when it afflicts and mortifies our neighbour, will not let the ruling description perceive, that the privilege for which your clients contend, is very nearly as much for the benefit of those who refuse it, as those who ask it. I am not to examine into the charges that are daily made on the administration of Ireland. I am not qualified to say how much in them is cold truth, and how much rhetorical exaggeration. Allowing some foundation to the complaint, it is to no purpose that these people allege that their government is a job in its administration. I am sure it is a job in its constitution; nor is it possible a scheme of polity which, in total exclusion of the body of the community, confines (with little or no regard to their rank or condition in life) to a certain set of favoured citizens the rights which formerly belonged to the whole, should not by the operation of the same selfish and narrow principles, teach the persons who administer in that government, to prefer their own particular, but well-understood private interest, to the false and ill-calculated private interest of the monopolizing company they belong to.

"Eminent characters, to be sure, over-rule places and circumstances. I have nothing to say to that virtue which shoots up in full force by the native vigour of the seminal principle, in spite of the adverse soil and climate that it grows in. *But speaking of things in their ordinary course, in a country of monopoly there can be no patriotism. There may be a party spirit—but public*

*spirit there can be none. As to a spirit of liberty, still less can it exist, or any thing like it. A liberty made up of penalties! a liberty made up of incapacities! a liberty made up of exclusions and proscriptions, continued for ages, of four-fifths perhaps of the inhabitants of all ranks and fortunes! In what does such liberty differ from the description of the most shocking kind of servitude?"*

A letter of young Burke at this time to his friend Mr. Smith, already introduced to the reader, reiterates his opinion of the leaders of Irish politics, and alludes to some of their mutual writings.

“ Dublin, Tuesday.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I should have more pleasure than I have in sending you the enclosed, if it were better worth your acceptance than it is. It has all the faults which some of its censurers have, in print, found with it; but if it had as many more, I am not sure that it would, *on this account*, be substantially the worse. I do not know whether I am capable of producing a work of literary merit, but I know I was not, in this instance, attempting any thing of the kind. I merely wished to ring a bell that should be heard; and felt no particular anxiety as to the sweetness of its tone. *Your* criticisms I shall indeed listen to with interest and attention; because I know you attend more to the matter than to the manner of a thing.

“ It appears that when you wrote, a letter of mine had not yet reached you. When it was sent to your house in Hume Street, the messenger was told that you had left Dublin, but that it should be sent after you without delay. It is therefore likely that you have received it by this time; and if so, you have discovered your mistake in supposing that I had not found time (I should have *made time*) to read over what you sent me. I have read the whole of it with pleasure, and will you think me too complimentary if I add—parts of it with admiration. The Vision and the Fable rival each other with me; and if it were not for the reception given to *Rekub* in the former, I do not well know which I should prefer. The controlling effect which you suppose his ascendent to produce on his opponent, is very happily imagined, and executed with great skill. I may—indeed I must be partial, where my father is concerned. But I will, notwithstanding, venture to say that I do not think him undeserving of the praise which you have bestowed, with so much cordiality and good taste.—Numbers 7 and 15 are also very good. In parts of the former there is a felicity of expression which I have seldom seen surpassed.

“ But yet, if you have received my letter, you know that I would dissuade you from giving your thoughts to the public in this form. The path which you are treading has been already



trodden, since the days of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, not only by first but by second rate writers; and one who neither knew the author, nor happened to fall upon a fascinating passage, might take up and open your book, only to shut and lay it down again.

“ You must introduce me to your father. Not to his acquaintance; for I have done this myself; perhaps forwardly enough; but under circumstances which, when you hear them, you will say amount to an apology, or something near it. Accordingly I am forgiven; for I am to be his guest on Saturday; but I fear without much chance of meeting you.—What I want you to introduce me to, is his favourable opinion. I flatter myself that to do this, will be but to communicate your own. We have not indeed met often, or known each other long; but on the day when I sat next you at Beaconsfield, it seemed to me that we made as much progress in intimacy as could well be made in an afternoon; especially by two lemonade drinkers, which I remember we were at the time.

“ The more I detect of the spirit of your Irish councils, the less I like them. ——— and ——— may be what you call them. But I fear you are doing what you do not mean to do, complimenting them. I suspect their bigotry to be no better than a mask; ugly enough in all conscience; but hiding what is less honest, and therefore more deformed. Then the vessel of your state! It seems to be without a rudder, or without a steersman; tossed at the will of wind and current, or of a management which is shifting, contradictory, and capricious; and what port it is to find, or whether it is to find any, I take to be rather a matter of chance than of calculation.

“ On some of these points, if you do not altogether differ from me, neither, I fear, are we quite agreed. I am some years older than you; and I think time will remove whatever differences of opinion at present exist between us on these subjects. In the mean while let me say you are too candid. Not content with throwing weighty reasons into your own scale, you are also for flinging arguments into that of your adversaries, which, without your assistance, many of them would not have discovered; but which you will find them ready enough to turn to an unfair and ungrateful purpose.

“ In my last letter you will have found me almost soliciting your active co-operation. This I do not expect; nor perhaps, under all the circumstances, ought I ever to have expected it. Yet there is nothing in the *substance* of my letter which I repent of. What I should do, if I were now revising it, would be to make it less formal than I believe it to have been. From the kindness of yours which is now before me, it appears that you have not forgotten an evening to which I have been alluding, and I am led to hope that you will pronounce mine (his letter) to have been too ceremonious, and will consider our Beaconsfield afternoon to have put me on a footing of more familiarity with you than I

have used. I shall feel greatly obliged by your reproaches upon this score.

“ Most faithfully yours,  
“ RICHARD BURKE.”

“ To William Smith, Esq.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

Letter to the Duke of Portland on the Conduct of the Minority—Letter to Mr. Smith—Character of Mr. Dundas—Remarks on the Policy of the Allies—Letters to General O'Hara, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Dolphin—Richard Burke the Elder—Report upon the causes of the duration of Mr. Hastings's Trial—Death of Young Burke—Dr. Lawrence's Letters.

THE tendency of the politics of Mr. Fox becoming more generally questioned in the country, and to many a source of suspicion, if not of apprehension, he thought it necessary to explain and defend his conduct more at large, by a letter addressed to his constituents, the electors of Westminster. This piece Mr. Burke characterized generally as eloquent, but displaying more forbearance than his friend Fox thought it necessary to display towards his “ Reflections,” he refrained from invidious criticism. Dr. Parr, however, though so staunch a friend of the “ Man of the People,” expressed himself slightly of the taste and literary merits displayed in its execution, observing in conversation, “ there were in it passages at which Addison would have *smiled*, and Johnson *growled*.”

A resolution of the Whig Club about this time, moved by Lord William Russell,—that their confidence in Mr. Fox was confirmed, strengthened, and increased by the calumnies against him—did not appear to operate much in setting him right in public opinion. But, being evidently levelled at the exceptions taken to his parliamentary conduct by Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and others, they immediately withdrew their names from the Club, to the number of forty-five noblemen and gentlemen, writing their reasons for seceding; and it being insinuated that the Duke of Portland had concurred in the obnoxious resolution, Mr. Burke, in justification of his own, and his friends' censures, drew up for the consideration of his grace, as the head of the party, the famous “ *Observations on the Conduct of the Minority*.”

This paper details, under fifty-four heads, a strong case against Mr. Fox, which that gentleman's friends, with their usual zeal, characterized as an unjustifiable proceeding; but it is difficult to conceive for what reason, except it be deemed unfair and injudicious to detach those we respect and desire to serve, from

attachments and from proceedings which we ourselves hold to be wrong, and which are held to be so by the great body of the nation. Thinking upon public affairs as Mr. Burke was known to do, it is not to be supposed that he would act otherwise than he did. The paper was transmitted to the Duke as a confidential communication sealed up, with an intimation that he did not even desire it to be read by him until a disconnexion of interests with Mr. Fox should take place, which the sagacious writer pronounced to be ultimately inevitable. It cannot therefore be justly characterized as being meant to *produce* a rupture between that nobleman and his leader in the House of Commons, but rather as a matter for consideration *consequent* upon such an event occurring from other causes. His own words in the letter to the Duke which accompanied the paper are—

“ I now make it my humble request to your Grace, that you will not give any sort of answer to the paper I send, or to this letter, except barely to let me know that you have received them. I even wish that at present you may not read the paper which I transmit; lock it up in the drawer of your library table, and when a day of compulsory reflection comes, then be pleased to turn to it. Then remember that your Grace had a true friend, who had, comparatively with men of your description, a very small interest in opposing the modern system of morality and policy; but who, under every discouragement, was faithful to public duty and to private friendship. I shall then probably be dead. I am sure I do not wish to live to see such things; but, whilst I do live, I shall pursue the same course.”

Communicated thus in confidence, it might have remained for ever, or for a long time at least, unknown to the world, but for the scandalous breach of confidence committed by the amanuensis of Mr. Burke, an ungrateful and unprincipled man named Swift, whom he had rescued from abject poverty; who, having kept a copy of what he was employed to transcribe, surreptitiously printed it in 1797, under the invidious title of “Fifty-four Articles of Impeachment against the Right Hon. C. J. Fox.” Mr. Burke being then at Bath confined to his bed, his friends in town obtained an injunction from the Chancellor to stop the circulation, but too late to prevent the distribution of many copies through the country. He wrote directly to Dr. Lawrence, desiring him to disclaim the act and the intention of publication, but not one of the sentiments which the paper contained.

The aim of it was unquestionably to beat down the belief that either the late conduct or opinions of Mr. Fox were constitutional, and to show that his proceedings on many recent occasions evinced an ambitious, a meddling, almost a treasonable,\* any thing

\* This alludes to sending his friend Mr. Adair, with his *cypher*, to St. Petersburg, to counteract the objects at which the Ambassador of the Crown aimed—an unprecedented occurrence in the history of the Opposition.



indeed, but a patriotic spirit. The heated exaggerations of his friends perhaps required to be cooled down to this freezing level. The care with which they reported his speeches, and detailed his sentiments, so that not a single idea worthy of notice, or a merit of any kind belonging to him should be lost to the public, was pointedly mentioned in the late session by the subject of this memoir, and the fact will recur to the memory of most readers of political history. Mr. Burke, however, should not have mentioned what in great measure originated with himself, except indeed he imagined he possessed an exclusive privilege to pull down the idol he had chiefly contributed to raise. He it was who first gave Mr. Fox to the world as a great man. He wrote him and spoke him into public esteem. He enlisted him into his party. He pushed him forward to lead to a certain degree the Rockingham connexion even over his own head, regardless of personal interests, or of that still greater object, personal importance, which was sure to accrue to himself from keeping such an ally at a distance. He knew that Mr. Fox, as much by his connexions as by his talents and rising popularity, would be most useful to his party, and that from his friendships with, and sway over, the most promising young men coming forward in Parliament, he was likely to possess a weight there which he himself, from many causes already specified, could not hope to acquire. There was the further motive of the regard of a master for a favourite pupil, for he tells us that Fox was brought to him when only a boy of fourteen; the triumph of one therefore was in some degree a merit of both.

All this partiality, therefore, was not without an object; but it was a party, not a private object; and therefore exhibited his personal disinterestedness. The fact shows us likewise the total absence on his part of any feeling akin to jealousy. It must not, however, be understood that he ever submitted to become a secondary person in this junction of interests, which was strictly in the nature of an alliance rather than a subjection of one to the other, for both continued to be principals; Burke being perhaps on the majority of occasions the real actuating spirit, and Fox the nominal leader of the party. It is at least certain, that whatever the one had determined to do, the other found it expedient to approve. There will not be a question therefore among those who are best acquainted with the political history of their mutual career, that Mr. Fox would never have arrived at that pre-eminence in his party, or in the country, which he possessed, had it not been for the active aid and counsel of Burke.\*

\* Of his fondness to applaud, or as somebody has termed it, to *puff* his pupil, as much on private as on public occasions, the following extract of a letter to his cousin Nagle, written in October, 1777, during the visit of Mr. Fox to Ireland, is an instance—

“ I am heartily glad and obliged to you for your letter, and for your kind remem-

The following letter, written about this time to his young friend in Ireland, Mr. Smith, alludes playfully to several of the lighter productions of that gentleman, whose pen was diligently employed on literary as well as political matters.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I have taken possession of one of your packets, and will forward the other as you desire. *Peter Parallel*\* is a very pleasant fellow; and tells serious truths with considerable humour. I need not tell you how much my son admires *The Vision*,\* for I know that he has told you this himself. But though I too thought highly of it from the first, you either must have improved it, or I appear to have done it scanty justice. But the fable of *The Rights of Waters*\* continues to be my favourite; and this you certainly have retouched, and to good effect. Your manuscripts too are in high request.† Miss —— declares that if she was a Naiad, she would be afraid of you; though I have made her confess, that there is nothing satirical in your gallantries. C —— says your French is exquisite; and as he is a Frenchman, and no flatterer, he may probably be trusted. I am no competent judge of this matter; but I certainly think your English is exquisitely tender. I write in haste, but hope I have said enough to prove that if the Muse should present you with any further pledges of attachment, they might be sent to nurse here with every prospect of a good reception. You must not, however, become a poet, or a gallant, even of the Naiads. Nature meant you, or I am mistaken, for something more respectable and useful. Yet I must confess that the compliments and regards with which I am

brance of me when you happened to see so many of my most particular friends in so remote and sequestered a spot as the Lake of Killarney. Ned Nagle told me that they were at your lodge, but your letter only expresses that you dined with them. Whenever you saw them I am sure that you passed a pleasant day; and I may venture to say, with no less certainty, that the satisfactions of the Lake of Killarney were heightened by meeting you there, and by your obliging attention to them. \* \* \* \* Don't you like Charles Fox? If you were not pleased on that short acquaintance you would on a further; for he is one of the pleasantest men in the world, as well as the greatest genius that perhaps this country has ever produced. If he is not extraordinary, I assure you the British dominions cannot furnish any thing beyond him. I long to talk with him about you and your Lough.”

\* These passages have reference to political essays, of which Mr. Smith was the author. The “Rights of Waters,” here spoken of so favourably by Mr. Burke, formed an ingenious parallel with the course of human life, in which, from the order of things established by the Great Creator of the universe, it is ordained that some must swim on the surface, some at the bottom of the great stream of society, more especially civilized society; but that the dispositions are not so fixed as not to exhibit continual fluctuations and changes of position. It was a blow at the principles inculcated by “The Rights of Man,” and similar productions.

† These manuscripts were juvenile poems—one addressed to the Naiad of Brynkinelt in North Wales, in commemoration of the excellence of the water of a spring in the demesne of Lord Dungannon; another inscribed to the Naiad of Tears, being an imitation of Gray's lines, “*O lacrymarum fons*,” &c. These lines Mr. Smith had likewise paraphrased in French.

charged, are intended for the poet. But I, who am an old politician, naturally direct my adieux to the embryo statesman, &c. &c.  
 “EDMUND BURKE.”

As a mark of respect for his unwearied labours, and the interest which he took in the public cause, events of importance on the continent connected with the war, were communicated to him as to a cabinet minister, by a special messenger. When the news of the surrender of Valenciennes arrived, a communication of this nature found him at the little theatre of Chalfont-St-Peter, a few miles from Beaconsfield, when he interrupted the performance for the purpose of reading aloud the contents of the dispatch to the audience, pointing out, as he proceeded, the importance of the conquest; and giving money to the humble orchestra to drink his Majesty's health, ordered them to play *God save the King*, which was accompanied by the audience in chorus.

The information forwarded on this occasion, and other civilities of a similar nature shown him by the Ministry, usually came through the channel of Mr. Dundas, with whom, of all the members of the cabinet at this time, he was most intimate, and for whom he had the greatest regard, arising as much from real respect for his talents, as for knowing him to possess qualities which form the surest pledges for the excellence of the heart.

This gentleman exhibited another instance of an eminent British Statesman, detached not merely from the law as a study, but from the active practice of it almost in the highest rank of the profession in his native country, to aim at a still higher prize in the lottery of political life in England. He was a younger son of the Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, and applying himself diligently to forensic pursuits, attained the important post of Lord Advocate at the age of thirty-four. Nearly about the same time he commenced his career in Parliament, as member for the county of Edinburgh, and the American war breaking out immediately afterwards, he thought it his duty to support the views and measures of ministry in that unfortunate contest. Under Lord Shelburne's Administration, however, he accepted the office of Treasurer of the Navy, and, on this account, was charged, as all statesmen are at some period or other of their lives, with inconsistency in quitting his former opinions on that topic, as well as with political ingratitude in deserting the falling fortunes of his original patron, Lord North. It was in this situation that he formed that intimate acquaintance, both personal and political, with Mr. Pitt, which continued with uninterrupted regard for the remainder of their lives, and which tended so materially to his own political success. With him he was thrown out by the coalition ministry in 1783; with him he again returned to power and resumed his office, in addition to becoming President of the Board of Control under the new system of government for India;



with him he debated side by side the great and trying questions agitated during the revolutionary war; and with him he quitted office in 1801, when unable to acquire for the Roman Catholics of Ireland those concessions which had been indirectly promised.

Soon after his return to power, in company with his great friend as first Lord of the Admiralty, having been, in the mean time, raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Melville, a dense cloud burst upon his head, and seemed for a moment to overshadow his fame. This was the tenth report of the commissioners of naval inquiry, who, in their examination into the business of the various offices in that department, charged him, if not with peculation, at least with mismanagement of the public money intrusted to his care, in his former office of Treasurer of the Navy. This shade however passed away, and has left nothing of stain behind it. Of any thing like guilt he was fully acquitted by the House of Lords, on the impeachment to which the charge gave rise; and the utmost censure to which he is amenable, is, perhaps, some degree of irregularity and negligence, arising rather from the misconduct of others than of his own, and against which it is difficult for any minister in a leading department of the state to guard, whose unavoidable confidence in his deputies in office, is ungenerously abused.

As a Minister he was sagacious, acute, practical in his views, unwearied in the duties of his office, fond indeed of performing them, and not difficult of access. The country is indebted to him in no inconsiderable degree, for a variety of measures and suggestions, many of which, however, remain yet to be appropriated to the rightful owner. The India department seemed to be for some years almost his own. His knowledge of it was necessarily much more extensive and minute than that of any other man in or out of Parliament, except Burke, while in acquaintance with the details of the local governments there, he possessed from his official situation several advantages. Between them there might be said to be a monopoly of this branch of information.

With Burke also he participated in the error, if any error can ever be proved to have been committed, of being the original accuser of Mr. Hastings. Some useful and important alterations connected with the administration of the government of India owe their origin to him. Among these was that extension of power to the Governor General of that country, which, while it left less room for those bickerings and contentions between Governor and council, which had formerly prevailed to so great a degree, exacted from the former in return for such confidence, a proportionate personal responsibility. At the commencement of the war with France, the volunteer system received an impulse from his judicious measures, which tended materially to rouse the spirit of the country. He planned and conducted, in opposition it is said

to several dissentient voices in the Cabinet, the expedition to Egypt which expelled the French from that country. On his accession to the Admiralty, the same active spirit of improvement accompanied him thither, and many judicious measures were devised for the comforts of the seamen, and the improvement of the situation of more than one class of the subordinate officers, until, to the unfeigned regret of all the other classes of that service over which he presided, the unexpected charge alluded to interrupted his career.

During nearly the whole of his political life, his influence in his native country was extensive, perhaps of late years unexampled; and it implies no ordinary merit on his part to find the quiet, the external prosperity, and the domestic improvement of the country to have kept pace with his tenure of power. No murmurings during this long period were heard; no dissatisfaction expressed against him for the exercise of this power, at undue partiality on the one hand, or unmerited disfavour on the other. In England it was his lot to be almost equally fortunate; and it must ever be considered a proof of singular exemption from great faults, or of a moderation of conduct which deprived popular prejudice of its favourite food, that in a period of the most envenomed political warfare, nothing more serious could be urged against him than a few harmless jests of Peter Pindar.

In Parliament, he never pretended to, and never sought, the character of a finished and imposing orator; for his manner was ungraceful, and his dialect provincial: content with grasping directly and forcibly the substance of his argument, he appeared little solicitous about the elegance of the manner in which it should be handled. But there was a boldness and decision in his mode of address that always commanded attention, and a solidity and acuteness in the matter it conveyed which seldom failed to perform their office of convincing. No ministry could have possessed a more useful member. He was not so much cut out for brilliant and overpowering efforts on special occasions as for the necessary and laborious duties, the expositions and defences of measures, which he had daily to undertake in carrying on the actual business of the state. He was rarely to be taken unawares, but ready as it seemed, every day, and every hour of the day, for debate.

Constantly opposed as he and Mr. Burke were to each other in the great theatre of national eloquence, neither the conflicting opinion, the biting sarcasm, nor the vehement reprehension with which a minister is often gratuitously saluted by a leader of Opposition, produced between them any thing like feelings of hostility. They first became more personally familiar in the session 1780—81, in consequence of serving on East India Committees; and saw in each other kindred qualities which subsequently served to soften something of the acerbity of party. From about the year 1790 until the death of Burke, occasional communication on

public matters took place between them. There was in Mr. Dundas a goodness of heart that claimed esteem; he was continually called upon by persons of whom he knew little to do kind offices, and he did them in the kindest, often in the most generous manner; he was frank, sociable, careless of money, and affectionate in his attachments,—qualities which acquired him nearly as many friends as he possessed acquaintance. Other and more imposing characteristics may belong to the statesman, but these call upon us to love, to distinguish, and unaffectedly to respect the memory of the man.

Mr. Burke, though a warm supporter of the war, as the only means of saving the country, differed frequently with Ministry on its details, more particularly the mode of carrying it on, which was scarcely ever to his satisfaction; and looking only to the results, his objections would seem to have been well grounded. One of the chief papers on the subject was “Remarks on the Policy of the Allies with respect to France,” begun in October 1793, a passage of which displays such an instinctive knowledge of France and of Frenchmen, that the cause of the ill-success of the Bourbons in conciliating the public mind of that country in 1814, will become immediately obvious, while it exhibits another instance of the sagacity which could teach that family twenty-one years before the event, the only mode of *securing* their kingdom in case they should again acquire it.

“Whoever claims a right by birth to govern there, must find in his breast, or conjure up in it an energy not to be expected, not always to be wished for, in well ordered states. The lawful prince must have in every thing but crime the character of an usurper. He is gone if he imagines himself the quiet possessor of a throne. He is to contend for it as much after an apparent conquest as before. His task is to win it: he must leave posterity to enjoy and to adorn it. No velvet cushions for him. He is to be always (I speak nearly to the letter) on horseback. This opinion is the result of much patient thinking on the subject, which I conceive no event is likely to alter.” The terms and spirit of the declaration or manifesto issued by the British Government, under date of October 29th (1793), he highly approved of, but thought its promulgation ill-timed and imprudent at a moment when, from the successes of the enemy, and the reverses of our own arms, hostile manifestoes appear more petulant than formidable.

In another passage he specifically points out, in express terms, as if futurity was open to his view, that no settlement of France could be hoped to be immediate, and that a military government, or something tantamount to it, must precede the formation of a regular government.

“What difficulties will be met with in a country exhausted by the taking of its capital (in money) and among a people in a manner new-principled, trained, and actually disciplined to anar-



chy, rebellion, disorder, and impiety, may be conceived by those who know what jacobin France is, and who may have occupied themselves by revolving in their thoughts what they were to do if it fell to their lot to re-establish the affairs of France. What support or what limitations the restored Monarchy must have, may be a doubt, or how it will pitch or settle at last; *but one thing I conceive to be far beyond a doubt; that the settlement cannot be immediate; but that it must be preceded by some sort of power, equal at least in vigour, vigilance, promptitude, and decision, to a military government.* For such a preparatory government no slow-paced, methodical, formal, lawyer-like system, still less that of a showy, superficial, trifling, intriguing court, guided by cabals of ladies, or of men like ladies; least of all a philosophic, theoretic, disputatious school of sophistry—none of these ever will, or ever can, lay the foundations of an order that will last.”

Toulon being now in our possession, he wrote the following letter in favour of a deserving officer, to the commandant of that place, Lieutenant-General O’Hara, who was an old acquaintance :

“My dear Sir,

“Some very pleasant things have happened to me lately, because they connect the public advantage with my private regards and affections. Toulon is ours (I trust it still is), and my friend General O’Hara commands. I heartily congratulate the nation, myself, and you, upon this happy combination of circumstances; and I promise myself every thing from it. Will you be so good as to keep an old humble servant of yours in your thoughts; and be so good as to excuse also this mode of reminding you of one that has always respected, and always will very sincerely respect you.

“The person who will have the honour of delivering this to you is Captain Edwards, an officer of thirty-two years’ unimpeached and meritorious service. He is a person whom I recommend with an earnestness very different from that which generally dictates ordinary letters of recommendation. I am extremely interested in every thing which can contribute to his honour and advantage; and if I can obtain for him your favour and protection, few things could happen more agreeable to me. I have known him for many years; and I have esteemed him as I have known him. He is a man of worth and integrity, if any man is so; and one in whose society it is impossible not to find great satisfaction from his good principles, good temper, and good nature. His object now is to be on the staff.

“Once more give me leave to assure you of my most sincere regards; and do me the justice to believe me always,

“My dear Sir, your most obedient,

“And faithful humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.

The dedication of his translation of Tacitus, by Mr. Murphy, drew two letters from Mr. Burke of mingled acknowledgments and criticism; the one written from Duke Street, May 26, 1793, the other from Beaconsfield, in December of the same year. In the former he says,—

“I thank you for the partial light in which you regard my weak endeavours for the conservation of that ancient order of things in which we were born, and in which we have lived neither unhappily nor disgracefully, and (you at least) not unprofitably to your country. As to me, in truth I can claim nothing more than good intention in the part I have to act. Since I am publicly placed (however little suitably so to my abilities or inclination), I have struggled to the best of my power against two great *public evils*, growing out of the most sacred of all things, Liberty and Authority. In the writings which you are so indulgent as to bear, I have struggled against the tyranny of freedom; in this my longest and last struggle (the impeachment, to which he had alluded in the foregoing part of the letter) I contend against the licentiousness of power.—When I retire from this, successful or defeated, your work will either add to my satisfaction or furnish me with comfort. *Securiorem et uberiorem, materiam senectuti seposui.*”

The second letter is interesting for the literary criticism which it contains.

“I have read the first book (the translation of Tacitus) through, besides dipping here and there into other parts. I am extremely delighted with it. You have done what hitherto I think has not been done in England; you have given us a translation of a Latin prose writer, which may be read with pleasure. It would be no compliment at all to prefer your translation to the last, which appeared with such a pomp of patronage. Gordon was an author fashionable in his time, but he never wrote any thing worthy of much notice but that work, by which he has obtained a kind of eminence in bad writing, so that one cannot pass it by with mere neglect. It is clear to me that he did not understand the language from which he ventured to translate; and that he had formed a very whimsical idea of excellence with regard to ours. His work is wholly remote from the genius of the tongue in its purity, or in any of its jargons. It is not English nor Irish, nor even his native Scotch. It is not fish nor flesh, nor good red-herring: yours is written with facility and spirit, and you do not often depart from the genuine native idiom of the language. Without attempting, therefore, to modernize terms of art, or to disguise ancient customs under new habits, you have contrived things in such a manner that your readers will find themselves at home. The other translations do not familiarize you with ancient Rome, they carry you into a new world. By their uncouth modes of expression, they prevent you from taking

an interest in any of its concerns. In spite of you they turn your mind from the subject, to attend with disgust to their unskilful manner of treating it; from such authors we can learn nothing.

“I have always thought the world much obliged to good translators like you. Such are some of the French. They who understand the original, are not those who are under the smallest obligations to you: it is a great satisfaction to see the sense of one good author in the language of another. He is thus *alius et idem*. Seeing your author in a new point of view, you become better acquainted with him; his thoughts make a new and deeper impression on the mind. I have always recommended it to young men in their studies, that when they had made themselves thorough masters of a work in the original, then (but not till then) to read it in a translation, if in any modern language a readable translation was to be found. What I say of your translation is really no more than very cold justice to my sentiments of your great undertaking. I never expected to see so good a translation. I do not pretend that it is wholly free from faults, but at the same time I think it more easy to discover them than to correct them. There is a style which daily gains ground amongst us, which I should be sorry to see further advanced by the authority of a writer of your just reputation. The tendency of the mode to which I allude, is to establish two very different idioms amongst us, and to introduce a marked distinction between the English that is written and the English that is spoken. This practice, if grown a little more general, would confirm this distemper, such I must think it, in our language, and perhaps render it incurable.

“From this feigned manner of *falsetto*, as I think the musicians call something of the same sort in singing, no one modern historian, Robertson only excepted, is perfectly free. It is assumed, I know, to give dignity and variety to the style; but whatever success the attempt may sometimes have, it is always obtained at the expense of purity and of the graces that are natural and appropriate to our language. It is true that when the exigence calls for auxiliaries of all sorts, and common language becomes unequal to the demands of extraordinary thoughts, something ought to be conceded to the necessities which make “ambition virtue;” but the allowances to necessities ought not to grow into a practice. Those portents and prodigies ought not to grow too common. If you have here and there (much more rarely however than others of great and not unmerited fame) fallen into an error, which is not that of the dull or careless, you have an author who is himself guilty in his own tongue of the same fault in a very high degree. No author thinks more deeply, or paints more strongly, but he seldom or never expresses himself naturally. It is plain that, comparing him with Plautus and Terence, or the beautiful fragments of Publius Syrus, he did not write the language of good conversation. Cicero is much



nearer to it. Tacitus, and the writers of his time, have fallen into that vice by aiming at a poetical style. It is true that eloquence in both modes of rhetoric is fundamentally the same; but the manner of handling is totally different, even where words and phrases may be transferred from the one of these departments of writing to the other."

His niece, Miss French, being about to bestow her hand upon Captain Haviland, Mr. Burke communicated the circumstance to the gentleman already mentioned, Mr. Dolphin, whose attention to her family was remembered with gratitude, and who still possessed the management of its pecuniary concerns—

TO OLIVER DOLPHIN, ESQ., LOUGHREA, IRELAND.

"My dear Sir,

"The parental care which you and Mrs. Dolphin have had the goodness to show to my niece, Mary French, calls at all times for my gratitude, and at this time for the communication which I think ought to be made to you of whatever is of importance with regard to her. She is at this time on the point of engaging in an important matter to all human creatures. A young gentleman in my neighbourhood, and whom I have known from his infancy, has been for a good while much attached to her, and she has shown a liking to him: I believe him to be a most worthy and honourable man, and likely to rise in the military profession; it is Captain Haviland (in the next promotion to be Major), son of the late General Haviland. He has something at present beside his commission, not wholly inconsiderable, and on his mother's death will have a reasonably good estate; so that on his side Mrs. Burke and I could have no just objection to their union.

"In giving him this young woman, I think I make him a very valuable present. I do not know a better creature: her temper is admirable, infinite good nature, a great deal of piety, much affection to her relations, and I am sure a mind full of love and gratitude to you and Mrs. Dolphin, of whom she never speaks without being sensibly affected. I think these dispositions in her promise as much happiness as is to be expected in any marriage.

"I now beg that as you have hitherto been so very kind as to interest yourself in her poor affairs, you will be pleased to send over a statement of them so as to enable us to direct a proper settlement; and that in future you would continue the protection which has hitherto been matter of so much advantage and consolation to her. I have seen your son, Mr. Dolphin, though from unpleasant occupations, not so much or so often as I wished. I am not singular in a very high opinion of the talents and virtues of this young gentleman, and the amazing progress which at his time of life he has made in whatever dis-

tinguishes a man in letters, and leads to professional distinction. I hope to be more fortunate when he returns amongst us. Mrs. Burke and Mary desire their most affectionate regards to you and Mrs. Dolphin; and do me the favour to believe me, my dear Sir,

“Your most faithful

“And obedient humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.

: “Beaconsfield, Nov. 28, 1793.”

Early in February, 1794, the affections of Mr. Burke received a severe shock in the death of his brother Richard, with whom, and indeed with all his relatives, he had ever lived in a degree of harmony and affection rarely witnessed in the most united families. There was but little difference in their ages. They had started nearly at the same time, and under circumstances nearly similar, though with very different capacities, to work up the hill of life together; and whenever the weaker powers of the younger caused him to lag behind, the hand of the elder was immediately extended to aid him on the journey. For many years they had but one purse and one house, and many of their friendships and pursuits were in common. The talents of Richard, though bearing no comparison with those of his brother, were much above mediocrity, and would have placed him high in any sphere of life, had not a constitutional vivacity and love of pleasure rendered him less patient of application than his brother: he wrote extremely well, but wanted industry. Lord Mansfield, who had formed a high opinion of his powers, pronounced him a rising man at the bar; but an inclination to politics, and the acceptance of the situation of one of the secretaries to the Treasury in 1782, and again in 1783, injured his prospects as a lawyer, though, through the interest of his brother, he became afterwards Recorder of Bristol, and one of the counsel on the trial of Mr. Hastings. His person was good; his features handsome; his manners prepossessing; which, with his wit and humour, gave him a ready introduction to the fashionable society of the metropolis.

Goldsmith, with whom he was in habits of intimacy, characterizes him almost as happily as he has done his brother Edmund—

“While Dick with his pepper shall heighten the savour.”

And again—

“Here lies honest Richard, whose fate I must sigh at;  
Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet!  
What spirits were his! what wit and what whim!  
Now breaking a jest and now breaking a limb!  
Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball!  
Now leasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!

In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,  
That we wished him full ten times a-day at Old Nick;  
But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,  
As often we wished to have Dick back again."

One particular species of the wagery here attributed to him occasionally afforded amusement to the domestic circle of his brother. He claimed the office it seems of reading the newspaper aloud every morning at the breakfast table, making such comments on the circumstances of the day as his whim and humour suggested; and when these proved barren of matter for his genius, he would turn to his brother's speech of the preceding night, read a part of it correctly, then suddenly introduce something of his own of quite an opposite purport to the report, and continue apparently to read with a grave face until interrupted by Edmund, with the exclamation—"This is all wrong, Dick; they quite mistake me." A silent assent was nodded by the wag, who nevertheless continued his teasing career of invention.—"These people," again would Mr. Burke exclaim, "are quite malicious or foolish to make me say such things." The wit, still unmoved by the simple perplexity of his brother at the stupidity of the reporters, would go on with something still more outrageous until finally stopped by the earnest and solemn assurance, "I declare to God, Dick, I said nothing of this kind."

When in the West Indies, Richard, it appears, made a purchase which turned out unfortunate, and ultimately occasioned him considerable pecuniary loss. To this circumstance Edmund alludes in a letter to Mr. Nagle, of July, 1772—

"Since my brother came home he has not been negligent in the management of his contested purchase. How the matter may finally terminate I know not; but hitherto he has gone on so successfully as to obtain a report of the Board of Trade, recommending to the Council the disallowance of the act of Provincial Assembly, which had put him out of possession and declared his title void. Thus far he has succeeded. Of the quiet and unmolested possession I do not despair; but as it is an affair of magnitude, so it will be a work of time and patience." Again in August, 1776, he says—"Richard the elder is in town. If his business had prospered, you would have been one of the first to hear of it. But we do not trouble our friends except with pleasing news. He has had much wrong done to him; but the thing is not yet desperate. I believe that the Commissioner who goes out will not have adverse instructions."\*

Mr. Burke took little share in parliamentary business until the session was pretty far advanced, and then chiefly by speaking in favour of voluntary subscriptions and enrolment of troops as not being unconstitutional, and as an evidence to the enemy of the

\* New Monthly Magazine, December 1825.



patriotic spirit of the country; of permitting foreigners, more especially French Royalists, to enlist in the British army; and of detaining persons suspected of designs against the government. He opposed, as he had before done, when himself a professed economical reformer, a violent amputation of the emoluments of pensions, sinecures, and particularly of the efficient offices of administration, in a bill proposed at this time by Mr. Harrison; observing that the amount would be contemptible in itself, and the principle absolutely dangerous—"As it went to a direct invasion of the rights and properties of individuals; for the emoluments of places held under the Crown were possessions as sacred as that of any landed property in the country, and a motion might as well be made for taking a certain part of the property of a man who possessed an estate of ten or twenty thousand a year."\*

A motion by General Fitzpatrick to address his Majesty to interfere with the King of Prussia for the release of La Fayette, then confined in one of his prisons, drew from Burke the severest animadversions upon that conceited pretender to patriotism, who by his mischievous yet contemptible conduct proved the origin and author of most of the calamities of France. Instead of being termed, he said, an "illustrious exile," he was then, and ought to be always considered, the outcast of the world, who having neither talents to guide nor in the least to influence the storm he had so diligently laboured to raise, fled like a dastard from the bloodshed and massacre in which he had involved so many thousands of unoffending persons and families.

In the debate on the Volunteer Bill, some squibbing took place between him and Mr. Sheridan; the former observing that long speeches without good materials were sometimes dangerous to venture upon, even for a popular man, quoting some doggerel to that effect, printed in the American war:

"Solid men of Boston, banish strong potatoes,  
Solid men of Boston, make no long orations.  
Bow, wow, wow."

When the wit, conceiving the first line, if not the second, might be aimed at him, keenly retorted by saying that he remembered some other lines from the same approved author:

"Now it hapt to the country he went for a blessing,  
And from his state daddy to get a new lesson;  
He went to daddy Jenky, by trimmer Hal attended.  
In such company, good lack! how his morals must be mended.  
Bow, wow, wow."

On the 5th of March, he moved for a committee to inspect the Lords' journals, relative to the proceedings on the trial of Mr. Hastings, and to report the facts and their observations thereon to the House. This report, occupying nearly 200 octavo pages, was

\* Similar sentiments had been on a former occasion declared by Mr. Fox.

accordingly made on the 17th of April, and is reputed by those who are presumed to be competent judges of the subject, which embraces very important questions in law, one of the ablest and most elaborate papers that have come from the pen of Mr. Burke. It observes in detail, under the various heads of Jurisdiction of the Lords—Law of Parliament—Rule of Pleading—Publicity of Judges' opinions—Debates on Evidence—Circumstantial Evidence—Practice of the Courts below—and others, as well as upon all minor occurrences connected with the impeachment; and the greatest source of surprise to the reader will be the recondite and various knowledge of legal forms, principles, and history which it exhibits, and which must hereafter make it a source of interest to the legal profession, upon which it comments with so much force and freedom, but without the least hostility.

“This report,” says a late lawyer of eminence,\* “was penned by Mr. Burke, and may be ranked among the most valuable productions of his pen. It turns on a question of the highest importance, both in legislation and jurisprudence—whether in cases for which neither the written nor unwritten law of a nation has provided courts of law may make a provision for it, by conforming existing laws and principles to it, or by subtracting it from their operation. The question occurs on a nice point in the doctrine of testimony; and to this the description in the report principally applies; but it embraces the whole of the subject, and abounds in learning and profound observation; unfortunately its title is far from alluring, and it has therefore been little read.”

“A short account,” adds a modern historian, “of the spirit of this document, and of the principal matters which it contains, is of high importance. It is a criticism not only upon this trial, but upon the law, a thing in this country of great rarity, from a source of high authority. It would also be a thing of great utility, if it would show the people of the country what they have been carefully disciplined not to believe, that no greater service can be rendered to the community than to expose the abuses of the law; without which the hope of its amendment is for ever excluded \* \* \* \*. Acutely sensible, however, to the spur of the occasion, he (Mr. Burke) felt the abuses which crossed him in his path. These he has displayed with his usual felicity of language; and these it is of importance with respect to the imitative herd of mankind to have stamped with the seal of his reprobation.”†

The report being published without authority in the form of a pamphlet, Lord Thurlow, the constant friend of Mr. Hastings in his legal difficulties, laid hold of the opportunity, which the forms of parliament of not noticing in one house what is said in the other would otherwise have prevented, to vent his indignation in the House of Lords upon a publication, the matter of which he

\* Charles Butler, Esq.

† Mill's British India, vol. v. pp. 231—2.

termed "disgraceful and indecent," "which tended to vilify and misrepresent the conduct of judges and magistrates entrusted with the administration of justice, and the laws of the country."

On the following day (May 23d), Mr. Burke, in his place, adverted to this attack in a brief and pointed reply, which, imperfect as is the report of it, is too masterly upon such a great constitutional matter to be omitted :

"The license of the present times makes it very difficult to talk upon certain subjects in which parliamentary order is involved. It is difficult to speak of them with regularity, or to be silent with dignity or wisdom. All our proceedings have been constantly published, according to the discretion and ability of individuals, with impunity, almost ever since I came into Parliament. By prescription people had obtained something like a right to this abuse. I do not justify it. The abuse is now grown so inveterate, that to punish it without a previous notice would have an appearance of hardship, if not injustice. These publications are frequently erroneous as well as irregular, but not always so: what they give as reports and resolutions of this House have sometimes been fairly given.

"It has not been uncommon to attack the proceedings of the House itself, under colour of attacking these irregular publications; and the House, notwithstanding this colourable plea, has, in some instances, proceeded to punish the persons who have thus insulted it. When a complaint is made of a piratical edition of a work, the author admits that it is his work that is thus piratically published; and whoever attacks the work itself in these unauthorised publications does not attack it less than if he had attacked it in an edition authorised by the writer.

"I understand, that in a place which I greatly respect, and by a person for whom I have likewise great respect, a pamphlet, published by a Mr. Debrett, has been very heavily censured. That pamphlet, I hear (for I have not read it), purports to be a report made by one of your committees to this House. It has been censured (as I am told) by the person and in the place I have mentioned in very harsh and very unqualified terms. It has been said, and so far very truly, that at all times, and particularly at this time, it is necessary for the preservation of order and the execution of the law, that the characters and reputation of the Judges of the Courts in Westminster Hall should be kept in the highest degree of respect and reverence; and that in this pamphlet, described by the name of a Libel, the characters and conduct of those Judges upon a late occasion had been aspersed, as arising from ignorance or corruption.

"I think it impossible, combining all the circumstances, not to suppose that this speech does reflect upon a report which, by an order of the committee on which I served, I had the honour of presenting to this House. For any thing improper in that report, I am responsible, as well as the other members of the committee, to this House, and to this House only. The matters contained in it, and the observations upon them, are submitted to the wisdom of the House, that it may act upon both in the time and manner that to your judgment may seem most expedient, or that you may not act upon them at all, if you should think it most useful to the public good. Your committee has obeyed your orders; it has done its duty in making that report. I am of opinion with the eminent person by whom that report is censured, that it is necessary, at this time very particularly, to preserve the authority of the Judges. This, however, *does not depend upon us, but upon themselves*. It is necessary to preserve the dignity and respect of all the constitutional authorities. This, too, depends upon ourselves. It is necessary to preserve the respect due to the House of Lords: it is full as necessary to preserve the respect due to the House of Commons: upon which, whatever may be thought of us by some persons, *the weight and force of all other authorities within this kingdom essentially depend*. If the power of the House of Commons is degraded or enervated, no other can stand. We must be true to ourselves; we ought to animadvert upon any of our members who abuse the trust we place in them: we must support those who, without regard to consequences, perform their duty.

"For your committee of managers, and for myself, I must say, that the report was deliberately made, and does not, as I conceive, contain any very material errors, or any undue or indecent reflection upon any person. It does not accuse the Judges of



ignorance or corruption, Whatever it says, it does not say calumniously. This kind of language belongs to persons whose eloquence entitles them to a free use of epithets. The report states, that the Judges had given their opinions *secretly*, contrary to the almost uninterrupted tenor of Parliamentary usage on such occasions. It states that the opinions were given, not upon the *law*, but upon the *case*. It states, that the mode of giving the opinions was *unprecedented, and contrary to the privileges of the House of Commons*. It states, that the committee did not know upon what rules and principles the judges had decided upon those cases, as they neither heard them, nor are they entered upon the journals. It is very true, that we were and are extremely dissatisfied with those opinions, and the consequent determination of the Lords, and we do not think such a mode of proceeding at all justified by the most numerous and the best precedents. None of these sentiments are the committee, as I conceive, (and I full as little as any of them) disposed to retract or to soften in the smallest degree.

“The report speaks for itself. *Whenever an occasion shall be regularly given to maintain every thing of substance in that paper, I shall be ready to meet the proudest name for ability, learning, or rank, that this kingdom contains, upon that subject.* Do I say this from any confidence in myself? Far from it! It is from my confidence in our cause, and in the ability, the learning, and the constitutional principles, which this House contains within itself, and which I hope it will ever contain; and in the assistance which it will not fail to afford to those who, with good intention, do their best to maintain the essential privileges of the House, the ancient law of Parliament, and the public justice of the kingdom.”

No one, as may be supposed, seemed inclined to take up the gauntlet thrown down in the concluding part of this address. On the 20th of June, Mr. Pitt moved the thanks of the House to the managers “for their faithful management in their discharge of the trust reposed in them,” which was carried. Mr. Burke, in the course of his reply, observed with great liberality, that prejudices against himself arising from personal friendship, or personal obligations to the accused, were too laudable for him to be discomposed at. He had thrown no general reflections on the Company’s servants; he had merely repeated what Mr. Hastings himself had said of the troops serving in Oude; and the House had marked their opinion of the officers in the very terms he had used. As for the other expressions attributed to him, they had been much exaggerated and misrepresented.

This was the last day he appeared in the house of Commons, having immediately afterwards accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

To a translation made some time before this by Mr. William Burke, of “Brissot’s Address to his Constituents,” Edmund, though without his name, gave a masterly preface, which, from exciting general notice, caused some demand for a book now no longer read by any one, and whose very name, notwithstanding the revolutionary notoriety of the author, is nearly forgotten. This introduction sketches a concise but powerful portrait of the Girondist faction, its principles and progress until overwhelmed and guillotined by that of Robespierre or the Mountain; but particularly of its chiefs Roland and Brissot, of the latter of whom he says,

“He is a chief actor in all the scenes which he presents. No man can object to him as a royalist; the royal party and the

Christian religion never had a more determined enemy. In a word, it is Brissot—it is Brissot the republican, the jacobin, and philosopher, who is brought to give an account of jacobinism, and of republicanism, and of philosophy.”

Immediately after the conclusion of the session, in July, 1794, the junction of the Portland party with Ministry, which previously existed in fact, took place in form by the Duke receiving a blue riband, the office of Third Secretary of State with the management of Ireland; Earl Fitzwilliam becoming at first President of the Council, and then Lord Lieutenant of that country; Earl Spencer, Lord Privy Seal, and soon afterwards First Lord of the Admiralty; and Mr. Windham, Secretary at War; Lord Loughborough already held the office of Lord Chancellor.

This union which was effected by Mr. Burke, from a conviction of its being intimately connected with the safety of the country, was stigmatized by the inconsiderate friends of Mr. Fox, as an interested desertion of him, their liege lord—as an act of moral rebellion against him whom they were politically bound to honour and obey. This story being still occasionally told, a single retrospective glance at the history of the party may serve to show its untruth—and that he in fact deserted them, and not they him.

It will be recollected that on being dismissed from his connexion with Ministry, by a contemptuous note from Lord North in 1774, Mr. Fox, as might be expected, joined, in fact if not in name, that division of opposition of which the Marquis of Rockingham was the head, and Mr. Burke the efficient leader and soul in the house of Commons. His admiration of the latter, which even at this time was unreserved, as well perhaps as a family disinclination to range himself under the banners of his father's former adversary, Lord Chatham, who led the other branch of the Minority, might have strengthened this determination; but in point of fact the Rockingham party contained by far the greater portion of talents, as well as of numbers; in its general principles he professed his warm acquiescence, and it promised the readiest road to power. A direct junction with it was therefore the most obvious step which an ambitious man, in furtherance of his own views, could well take. Mr. Burke, in a most friendly, and indeed affectionate letter, already alluded to, written to him to Ireland, in October 1777, and beginning *My dear Charles*, instead of attempting to bias his choice of political friends by undue persuasion, expressly says, “Do not be in haste. Lay your foundations deep in public opinion. Though (as you are sensible) I have never given you the least hint of advice about joining yourself in a declared connexion with our party, nor do I now; yet, as I love that party very well, and am clear that you are better able to serve them than any man I know; I wish that things should be so kept as to leave you mutually very open to one another in all changes and contingencies; and I wish this the

rather, because in order to be very great, as I am anxious you should be (always presuming that you are disposed to make a good use of power), you will certainly want some better support than merely that of the crown.”\*

The choice of his associates was therefore voluntarily, no doubt wisely, and at least deliberately made by Mr. Fox. He acceded ultimately to the Rockingham party and to its principles in form; he dissented from it in no matter of moment; on the contrary acknowledging, after the death of the Marquis, the Duke of Portland and Earl Fitzwilliam as the new heads of the connexion, and consulting them on all public measures, with the deference due to their rank and public weight in the country until the occurrence of the French Revolution, when his views either changed, or at least when the change became obvious to his coadjutors.

By this time, however, he had formed a considerable party of his own. He had gathered around him a number of ingenious and able men, many of them young, some of them almost grown up under his eye in Parliament, who, attracted by the splendour of his talents and reputation, eagerly sought his friendship, embraced his opinions, and who, disregarding or not acknowledging any other influence, looked to him alone as their leader. In return for this distinction, he probably found it necessary to accommodate some of his opinions to theirs; and the eventful scenes passing in France being well calculated to engage in their favour the ardent feelings of these friends as well as his own to a considerable degree, in addition to the hope of strong popular support, the re-action of such mingled feelings and expectations upon each other probably produced that degree of heat in the cause he had now embraced, and that dissent from his more ancient connexions which had hitherto been evident only on the single question of parliamentary reform. It was also urged by his adherents, that his views and principles in public affairs were more on a level with the free and enlightened spirit of the age than those of Mr. Burke, who was represented as fettered by old systems and prejudices, and too strong an adherence to the notions of the aristocracy in matters of government.

Whatever be the cause, just at the critical moment in question, Mr. Fox appeared to push to excess in theory, and seeming approval in practice, doctrines which the Old Whigs, as well as others, conceived to be at variance with sound discretion. “In my journey with them through life,” said Mr. Burke, “I met Mr. Fox in my road, and I travelled with him very cheerfully as long as he appeared to me to pursue the same direction with those in whose company I set out. In the latter stage of our progress a new scheme of liberty and equality was produced in the world, which

\* Burke's Works, vol. ix. 8vo. ed. p. 156.



either dazzled his imagination, or was suited to some new walks of ambition which were then opened to his view. The whole frame and fashion of his politics appeared to have suffered about that time a very material alteration."

At this period he withdrew his political allegiance from the acknowledged heads of the party, who were no longer consulted on any of his measures; and in Parliament he treated with asperity and ridicule their opinions and their fears for the public safety. Still, with the exception of Mr. Burke and a few others, the majority were unwilling to come to an open rupture; they were loath to quit him, and yet knew not how, with propriety or satisfaction to themselves, to continue to act with him; and it was not one of the least curious anomalies of the time to hear many who gave him their votes and general support in the House, condemn their own votes and all his proceedings in detail, the moment they quitted it. The general belief was, that time and experience would produce an alteration of sentiments as the crimes of the revolutionists became developed. More than three years' experience, however, convinced the whole of that body that his co-operation was not to be expected; the junction, as already stated, therefore took place, but the deliberate consideration that preceded, and the pecuniary arrangements which attended it, so far as he was concerned, left him without the slightest cause for complaint. It was petulant, therefore, and incorrect on the part of his partizans to accuse them of deserting him, when, as has been said, the contrary might be said to be nearer to the truth. *They* were the head of the connexion; to their system *he* had acceded; and if he found cause to dissent from the general principles which they had always hitherto acknowledged, the difference could not be justly laid to their charge.

The conduct of this body indeed at the moment displayed any thing rather than undue eagerness for power. The first determination of the Duke of Portland and Mr. Windham was *not* to accept of office, believing that more support might be given to government by an open and uninfluenced vote in Parliament than by becoming officially connected with it—a disinterested and patriotic idea certainly, but not perhaps a very sound conclusion in the business of governing a kingdom. Mr. Burke soon taught them, and was well enabled to teach them, better; for long and hardly-earned experience had satisfied him, in his own case if in no other, how comparatively useless are the most splendid talents and the best intentions, without the possession of power to give them effect. It is to his honour, that the handsome annuity settled by the party on Mr. Fox previous to their final separation, met with his warm approval.

Several attempts had been previously made by mutual friends to bring these distinguished men to something like their former intimacy; but Burke constantly observed that it would be mere

mockery to meet in a formal interview, when their radical differences of political principle, precluded either unity of feeling or of action. "My separation from Mr. Fox," said he, "is a principle, and not a passion; I hold it a sacred duty while the present disorganizing system continues in operation in Europe, to confirm what I have said and written against it by this sacrifice, and it is no trifling test of my sincerity. To me the loss is great; but to what purpose would be our meeting when our views and conduct continue so essentially at variance? I could take no delight with him, nor he probably with me."

A calamity now overtook Mr. Burke of the most grievous as well as the most unexpected description, which all his religion and philosophy were in vain exerted to surmount, and which fell with additional weight from being so shortly preceded by the loss of his brother. This was the death of his son, Mr. Richard Burke, on the 2nd of August, 1794, at the early age of thirty-six. His health, although for some time in an unsettled state, was so far from proving a source of uneasiness or apprehension to the fond father, that he had looked forward with anxiety to the moment when, by his own retirement from Parliament, he should be enabled to give him that opportunity for taking part in public affairs to which he conceived his talents in every way equal. Accordingly, immediately after he had vacated his seat, they both proceeded to Malton, and the parliamentary return of his son for the borough, according to his anxious desire, took place. The latter on the next day, addressed the following affectionate letter to his cousin, now become Mrs. Haviland:—

"My dearest Mary,

"I cannot let this post, which is the first after my election, go out without assuring you of my most affectionate remembrance, and giving you the satisfaction of receiving one of my first franks, as I am sure there is no person who takes a more sincere interest in any good event that can befall me. I should have written to you from London, but that the hurry I was in for some days before I left town rendered it nearly impossible. We have been much gratified by Captain Haviland's constant correspondence from Tonbridge and by your very good letters, which show how little excuse you had for writing so little before. But I see you are resolved to get rid of all your faults, which were, however, neither numerous nor important ones.

"I have by no means forgot your bracelets, and I hope you will be pleased with them as a token of my affection, though my purse does not enable me to make it very worthy of you. Nor have I forgot Captain Haviland's commission; Mr. Greenwood (I think his name is) the agent told me Colonel Forbes's regiment would be complete in about a month. My love to

Captain Haviland and Mrs. Carey, who I suppose is still with you.

“Yours ever,

“RICHARD BURKE.”

The father was further gratified by having him appointed secretary to his friend Earl Fitzwilliam, the new viceroy of Ireland; and at a dinner given to several friends on their return to town, he was anticipating for him, wholly unconscious of the impending danger, a brilliant career of service in that country, although the guests viewed his hectic and disordered countenance with very different emotions. None of these, notwithstanding their intimacy, ventured to express their fears. Neither did the physicians think it prudent to alarm him by premature disclosure, in case of the disease, which was judged to be a decline, proving gradual and lingering; Dr. Brocklesby giving it as his opinion, from perfect acquaintance with the strong paternal affection and sensitive feelings of Mr. Burke, that a knowledge of the real nature of the disease and of the danger attending it, would probably prove fatal to him sooner than to his son. Cromwell House at Brompton was however taken for him by their advice, to be in the air, and yet near to town preparatory to his journey to Ireland. Here he became rapidly worse; and concealment being no longer possible, the melancholy truth was at length communicated, just a week before the fatal event occurred, to the father: who, from this time till the fate of his offspring was decided, slept not, scarcely tasted food, or ceased from the most affecting lamentations; seeming to justify the prediction of the physician, that had it been communicated to him sooner his own death might have been the result.

In the closing scene itself there were some circumstances sufficiently affecting; but of these Dr. French Laurence, the civilian, and afterwards well known in Parliament, the intimate friend of Mr. Burke, and a constant visitor at his house, must be the historian. A series of his letters, addressed to the senior Mrs. Haviland, descriptive of the melancholy scenes now passing in the family, exists, which I have great pleasure in submitting to the reader. They are not merely well, but pathetically written; evincing all that feeling and commiseration which one generous mind suffers in witnessing the affliction of another, and that other a great and admired man, as well as an esteemed friend.

“August 1st, 1794.

“My dear Madam,

“As Dr. King undoubtedly communicated to you the melancholy contents of my yesterday’s letter, you will certainly be anxious to know whether another day has brought any new hope. There is a little, feeble and faint. The sentence is at least re-



spited for a time. A second letter from Mr. Burke yesterday in the evening, informed me that the physicians forbade him to despair. At the same time I received a note from Dr. Brocklesby, at whose house I had called, and this morning I have seen him. He says there is no such immediate danger as his father apprehends, but he fears the ultimate event.

“The disorder is a consumption, which has however not yet actually reached the substance of the lungs, but has spread to the lower part of the trachea, as it is technically called, or the wind-pipe. It is supposed to have extended as far as the point where the tube divides itself into two branches. The family are with poor Richard in country lodgings a little beyond Brompton. It is a house of mourning indeed, a scene of affliction, Dr. Brocklesby says, almost too much for him, who, as a physician, is inured to these sights, and in some degree callous to them. Mrs. Burke, he says, sustains herself nobly, to keep up the fortitude of her husband. Mr. Burke writes to me that she seeks tranquillity in prayer; he is himself (as he tells me) almost dried up; there is however, in his last letter, plainly a gleam of hope, and a tone of comparative calmness of spirit. The conclusion of his first letter was highly affecting. He ended with an abrupt exclamation, “Oh! my brother died in time.”—Some of them wrote to William Burke yesterday; I should otherwise have written. The letter was franked I suppose by poor Richard.—Present my best compliments to all your society. I write in great haste. Adieu.

“Dear madam,

“Very sincerely,

“Your afflicted humble servant,

“F. LAURENCE.”

“August 4th, 1794.

“Dear Madam,

“When I shortly informed you of the melancholy event on Saturday, I was acquainted with the event, and nothing more, from the mouth of Dr. Brocklesby. Some of the particulars I have since collected, as well as I could; and as every little circumstance must be interesting to you, who had known him from his infancy, I shall faithfully relate to you what I have heard. It may afflict you, but there is a pleasure in such sorrow, which he who cannot taste, deserves to be pitied.

“From my former letters to Dr. King and yourself, you know every thing till the night previous to his death. During that night he was restless and discomposed. In the morning his lips were observed to have become black. His voice, however, was better, and for the first time since his attack on the preceding Monday, some asses' milk and some other little sustenance which he took, remained quietly on his stomach. But his father and mother did not suffer themselves to be too much flattered by these favourable

symptoms, which might be, what they too surely proved to be in the event. Their lamentations reached him where he lay. He instantly arose from his bed, and to make his emaciated appearance less shocking to his parents, changed his linen and washed himself; he then desired Mr. and Mrs. Webster,\* whose tender care of him was unremitting, to support him towards the door of the room where his father and mother were sitting in tears. As soon as he arrived at the door, he exerted himself to spring forward alone, and treading firmly, (as you remember was his usual mode of walking, but then treading so more studiously for the purpose of convincing his father how little his strength was diminished) he crossed the room to the window, and afterwards to the quarter where they were. He endeavoured to enter into conversation with his father, but grief keeping the latter silent, he said, after some observations on his own condition, "Why, Sir, do you not chide me for these unmanly feelings? I am under no terror; I feel myself better and in spirits, yet my heart flutters I know not why. Pray talk to me, Sir; talk of religion, talk of morality, talk if you will on indifferent subjects." Then turning round, he asked, "What noise is that? Does it rain? Oh! no; it is the rustling of the wind through the trees;" and immediately with a voice as clear as ever in his life, with the most correct and impressive delivery, and a more than common ease and grace of action, he repeated three beautiful lines from Adam's morning hymn in Milton. You will certainly anticipate me in the lines; they are favourite lines of his father's, and were so, as I recollect, of his poor uncle, to whom he was then going with these very lines on his tongue.

"His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,  
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,  
With ev'ry plant in sign of worship wave."

He began again, and again pronounced the verses with the same happiness of elocution and gesture, waved his head in sign of worship, and worshipping, sunk into the arms of his parents as in a profound and sweet sleep.

"Afflicted as I have been for this year past with the apprehension of this calamity, I now, on calm consideration, thank God for all the circumstances of his end; since his departure was fixed in the inscrutable purposes of Providence. I thank God, that his father and mother did not seriously feel his danger till the last week of his life; I thank Him that they had some short time of preparation; and I thank Him also that they were not doomed for whole months, as the physician had expected, to languish and consume themselves with unavailing sorrow over a beloved, and justly beloved son, dying by inches before their eyes.

"The behaviour of our two poor remaining friends is such as might be expected from them by those who rightly knew both their

\* Old and faithful servants in the family.

sensibility and strength of reason : though perhaps for the exertion of the latter under so severe a dispensation, we hardly gave them sufficient credit. During the first day, the father was at times, as I have heard, truly terrible in his grief. He occasionally worked himself up to an agony of affliction, and then bursting away from all control, would rush to the room where his son lay, and throw himself headlong, as it happened, on the body, the bed, or the floor. Yet at intervals he attended and gave directions relative to every little arrangement, which their situation rendered necessary, pleasing himself most with thinking what would be most consonant to the living wishes and affections of his lost son.

“At intervals too he would argue against the ineffectual sorrow of his wife. She, on the other hand, sometimes broke into fits of violent weeping, sometimes showed a more quiet but a more determined grief, and at other times again a more serene composure than her husband. Instead of dashing herself down, like him, she only lamented, that when on Thursday, by an accidental fall she sprained her wrist, ‘it had not been her neck :’ but when her husband attempted to persuade her, that she had no business still to remain in the house, she answered steadily, ‘No, Edmund ; while he remains here I will not go.’ I am happy, however, to inform you that on Saturday evening she took and gave a promise that neither of them would ever enter more the chamber where their son lay. They have repented ; both however have fulfilled their mutual promises, and she has consented, notwithstanding her resolution above mentioned, to leave the house this day.

“This letter is longer than I intended, or than my time can well afford. But you, I am sure, will not think it too minute : you will rather find ten thousand omissions of things, into which you would inquire ; and I perhaps could have added many things, if I had stopped to consider what I should write. Yet on the whole, if I can trust the information of Mr. and Mrs. Nugent and Mrs. Carey, compared with what I received from the servant of our departed friend, I believe I have given you a sufficiently correct notion in general of the circumstances attending the fatal event, as well as the present situation of things in that miserable ruin of a family.

“On Saturday, I understand, that I shall probably be at Beaconsfield.—Oh ! God ! on what an occasion !—perhaps for the last time, except in transient visits to those friends there, whom I shall ever esteem.

“ Most sincerely,

“ Yours ever,

“ FRENCH LAWRENCE.”

“ P.S. I have just received a note from Dr. King. He says, ‘none or little change yet for the better.’ Dupont, who brought it to me, tells me that after poor Richard sunk down, he was undressed and put to bed, where poor Jane Burke, rubbing him with vinegar, or any other such vain methods of recalling his fleeting



spirit, received one last sigh, and with her own hand then closed his eyes for ever."

"August 7th, 1794.

"Dear Madam,

"At last I have seen poor Burke. His grief was less intolerable than I had supposed. He took me by surprise, or I should *then* have avoided him. He told me he was bringing his mind by degrees to his miserable situation, and he lamented that he went to see his son after death, as the dead countenance has made such an impression on his imagination that he cannot retrace in his memory the features and air of his living Richard. He did not stay long in the room, but from Dr. King, whom I also saw last night for the first time, I learned more particulars.

"He confirmed the accounts which I gave you in my former letters, with some slight differences. His father was alone in the room when he walked in as I informed you, but the subsequent conversation did not pass there. After staying a very short time, poor Richard returned to his bed-chamber and laid himself on his bed. It was then the conversation took place in presence of both his parents, and when he asked if it rained, his father, and not himself, explained what the cause really was—the wind rustling through the trees. On which, after twice repeating the lines from Milton, he sunk into the arms of his parents, and a short struggle ensuing, Mrs. Burke was prevailed upon to retire, till Dr. King announced to her that all was over.

"Yesterday, for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. Burke ate their dinner; but he with more appetite comparatively than she did. He has in general slept pretty well. She I believe not so well. William Burke has come, but has not yet seen them. He weeps like a child.

"I went or sent yesterday to all the newspapers, and got promises that the paragraph\* should not be inserted. At one place I learn that it actually was cut out for the purpose of being inserted. At the Herald office I was told that it actually came from a correspondent in the country, and that it was in a female hand-writing. They assured me that they would stop and send to me any thing in future communicated to them on the same subject, if any such should reach them; at the same time they observed that they could not answer that they might not put in paragraphs from the same quarter, which, being distant allusions, they might not understand, though the lady and myself, as well as our friends, might very well know what was meant.

"I am, dear Madam,

"Very sincerely, yours ever,

"F. LAWRENCE."

\* The purport of the paragraph here alluded to does not appear, but it probably related to some of the circumstances in the Burke family connected with the loss they had just experienced.

“ August 12, 1794.

“ My dear Madam,

“ At last I have had the pleasure (I may truly say under the circumstances) of seeing our dear Mrs. Burke; and I have the satisfaction of informing you that I found her better than I was taught to expect.

“ After the first meeting she was more composed than he, or she played her part more naturally in order not to discompose him. When I was separated from her arms, he took me by the hand, and spoke to me with a tone of artificial and laborious fortitude: she saw through the disguise and gently reproved him for not supporting himself as he promised. She entered occasionally with apparent sincerity into some of the topics of consolation upon which I touched a little, when any expressions of his seemed to render them necessary; and occasionally she took part in the general topics of conversation which were introduced. But once when he had walked to the other end of the room, and once when he was reading to himself, she raised her hands and cast upward at the same time a piteous look of silent affliction. His mind seemed to be more fully engaged than hers, by the general conversation, but he had frequent, though not excessive bursts of grief.

“ I was very much delighted with one thing which I heard. Mrs. Burke, who for three nights had taken a gentle opiate, omitted it on Sunday night, and slept well without it. She assured me too that the complaint in her limbs was at present better.

“ I was told by him, that they had read a good deal in the course of the day, which I very much approved.

“ On my asking when they would go into the country, she turned to him, who answered, whenever she pleased. She then said some time in the course of the week. I expressed a desire to go with them, but she only said, without any direct yes or no, that they should have some business. At parting he begged me to come as much to him as I could. It was however so much the request of poor William and Mrs. Nugent at Beaconsfield that I would come, that my plan is at all events to come to you for a few days; or if the Captain and Mrs. Thomas Haviland take up their abode with you, then to take possession of his house. I can then be at Butler's Court all the day or the greatest part of it, as may be useful and most convenient. I beg you will not think it necessary to give yourself the trouble of an answer, but arrange things at your discretion for the best against Thursday, or whatever day we may come.

“ I am, dear Madam,

“ Very sincerely yours,

“ FR. LAWRENCE.”

" August 13, 1794.

" Dear Madam,

" Yesterday evening I was happy again to learn that our poor Jane Burke had slept well without the aid of medicine. Mr. Burke was somewhat lower, which a little affected her, but I think it was only the natural progress of his grief, settling regularly from sudden bursts mingled with intervals of forced composure, into a more even and sober melancholy.

" They talk of removing to Butler's Court on Friday, but said nothing inviting me with them. I shall therefore come, and on reflection, to Captain Haviland's house, as I bring papers with me to occupy my leisure minutes. If I should not see your son, I presume you have authority sufficient to give me possession.

" As you heard the contents of a letter \* which I wrote from your house, I hold it due to my truly noble friend that you should also know the answer. It bears in every respect the express image of his mind. He explains to me his silence when Dr. W. King mentioned to him his letter to Lord ———. He says that he never has asked Lord ———, or any friend of his own who possesses the same sort of parliamentary interest, and makes the same use of it that Lord ——— does, a syllable respecting the destination of it. And this is a fixed principle with him. This was the reason of his taking no immediate notice of what Dr. King told him. He then passes to the general part of my letter, and informs me, 'He is glad to know that Parliament is my wish, because he will endeavour to contribute to its accomplishment, although he cannot speak with precision as to the mode or time of effecting it, and he hopes it is useless to assure me that he cannot have a greater pleasure than in testifying to me and the world the friendship which he feels for me.'

" It gives me the most lively satisfaction on reflection, to be able to say, that what I expressed in my letter to him I sincerely felt. I had no doubt of his friendship—I write in great haste.—Adieu till we meet.

" Very sincerely yours,

" FRENCH LAWRENCE."

The son thus deeply lamented had always conducted himself with so much filial duty and affection towards both parents, and more especially in soothing the unavoidable irritations to which his father was subjected by the prominent part he took in public affairs, as to sharpen the natural feelings of sorrow of the parent, by reflecting that he had also lost a counsellor and friend. Their confidence on all subjects was even more unreserved than commonly prevails between father and son, and their esteem for each

\* To Mr. Burke; which expressed his wish to get into Parliament, and remotely hinted at the exertion of his influence to aid him in the attempt.



other higher. The son looked to the father as one of the first, if not the very first, character in history; the father had formed the very highest opinion of the talents of the son, and among his friends rated them superior to his own; he had enlarged the house at Beaconsfield for his particular pursuits and accommodation; he consulted him for some years before his death on almost every subject, whether of a public or private nature, that occurred, and very often followed his judgment in preference to his own where they happened to differ. He possessed solid parts, much knowledge, and firmness and decision, united with strict integrity of mind.

The loss of such a companion and confidant, the unexpected and irremediable destruction of the hopes entertained of his advancement and fame, and as the only remaining child he possessed, the consequent extinction of the hopes of descendants to continue his name, was naturally felt with excessive poignancy. It shook his frame indeed to its centre, and though without the slightest effect on his intellectual energies, his bodily powers rapidly declined. He never afterwards could bear to look towards Beaconsfield Church, the place of his interment; nor was he perhaps for any length of time ever absent from his mind except when engaged in literary composition, which therefore became rather a relief than a labour. The late Bishop of Meath (O'Beirne) used to say, that the first time he had an opportunity of seeing him after the melancholy event, he was shocked to observe the change which it had produced in his appearance; his countenance displayed traces of decay and of mental anguish, his chest was obviously much sunk, and altogether exhibited the appearance of one bowed down both in frame and in spirit by affliction.

Nearly all his private letters and publications written after this time contain many and pathetic allusions to his loss, and in his conversation they were still more frequent. He called him "the hope of his house," "the prop of his age," "his other and better self." Writing to a relation on the birth of a son, he said, "may he live to be the staff of your age, and close your eyes in peace, instead of, like me, reversing the order of nature and having the melancholy office to close *his*." To Mr. (now Baron) Smith he writes: "So heavy a calamity has fallen upon me as to disable me for business and to disqualify me for repose. The existence I have I do not know that I can call life \* \*. Good nights to you—I never can have any." In a private letter to the same gentleman, he says, "Yes; the life which has been so embittered cannot long endure. The grave will soon close over me and my dejections." To Sir Hercules Langrishe he talks of the remainder of his "short and cheerless existence in this world." In a letter to Lord Auckland, he says, "For myself or for my family (alas! I have none) I have nothing to hope or to fear in

this world." The *Letter to a noble Lord* speaks of the "sorrows of a desolate old man." And again, "The storm has gone over me; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots and lie prostrate on the earth." "I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. I greatly deceive myself if in this hard season of life I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honour in the world." To William Elliot, Esq. he writes, "desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my guide. You know in part what I have lost, and would to God I could clear myself of all neglect and fault in that loss," and numberless others of a similar sorrowful import are scattered through his subsequent writings. It was a matter of the least consideration that except for this heavy affliction Mr. Burke was to have been raised to the honours of the peerage, but become now infirm, childless, and desponding, every feeling of ambition became extinguished in his breast, as the preceding expressions plainly intimate. Notwithstanding this, perhaps the honour should have been bestowed and accepted; it would have been a satisfaction, if not to himself, at least to his friends and to his admirers, as a testimony of national gratitude to a man of such extraordinary and varied talents, exerted with extraordinary vigour in every department of the public service; and as a passport to the greater favour and consideration of that numerous class of the community (and those too not of the least rank or influence), who would estimate at a very different value the exertions and services of plain Mr. Burke, and those of Lord Burke, or Lord Beaconsfield.

In person, young Burke was not so tall or so muscular as his father, but well formed and active, his features smaller and more delicate, though handsome and expressive, supposed to bear some resemblance to those of his uncle Richard, and his complexion florid. A picture of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds is an admirable likeness, "as exact," said a literary lady, a friend of the family, who saw it at the painter's before it was sent home, "as the reflection of a mirror." From this portrait his father, soon after his death, caused a print to be engraved, which preserves much of the spirit of the original. Underneath it, after his name, age, and the date of his death, are the following lines, altered in a slight degree from Dryden's elegiac poem of *Eleonora*—

"As precious gums are not for common fire,  
They but perfume the temple and expire;  
So was he soon exhaled and vanish'd hence,  
A short sweet odour at a vast expense."

Adding to these, as at once characteristic of his grief and his pride,

"O dolor atque decus."



The following character of him from the pen of Dr. Walker King, Bishop of Rochester, his intimate friend from youth, appeared in the newspapers a few days afterward.

“Died on Saturday last, at Cromwell House, aged thirty-six, Richard Burke, Esq. M.P. for the borough of Malton, and the only son of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke.

“The irreparable loss which his country, his friends, and relations have sustained by this event, is known best to those who knew him best.

“His talents, whether for business or speculation, were not exceeded by any which the present or perhaps any former age could boast. In that share, unfortunately small, which fell to his lot in public affairs, the superior abilities which he manifested were acknowledged by the first characters in public life. Perhaps it was owing to their magnitude and solidity, disproportioned to the currency of the times, that they remained without farther employment.\*

“The variety and extent of his erudition was great: but what distinguished him in literature was the justness, refinement, and accuracy of his taste.

“In society his manners were elegant; and the best judges both at home and abroad, thought him one of the best bred men of the age. He was, at the same time, rigidly and severely sincere. He was of moderate stature, but of a beautiful countenance, and an elegant and graceful figure: he wanted no accomplishment of body or mind.

“In the discharge of all the duties of friendship, and in acts of charity and benevolence, his exertions were without bounds: they were often secret—always, like all his other virtues, unostentatious. He had no expenses which related to himself; what he wanted from the narrowness of his means, was made up from the abundance of his heart and mind; and the writer of this, who knew him long and intimately, and was himself under the most important obligations to him, could tell how many deserving objects he assisted, and some of whom he snatched from ruin by his wise counsel and indefatigable exertions. He never gave up a pursuit of this kind whilst it was possible to continue it.

\* This was the opinion of many of Mr. Burke’s friends, relative to the major part of the ministry, arising no doubt from the obvious jealousy which Mr. Pitt occasionally displayed to having men in the Cabinet with him, whose talents might interfere either in the public or in the royal opinion, with his own. Mr. Burke himself also conceived there was a disinclination to bring forward his son into public life. In the letter to William Elliot, Esq. (1795) he says:—

“Had it pleased Providence to have spared him for the trying situations that seem to be coming on, notwithstanding that he was sometimes *a little dispirited by the disposition* which we thought shown to depress him and set him aside; yet he was always buoyed up again: and, on one or two occasions, he discovered what might be expected from the vigour and elevation of his mind, from his unconquerable fortitude, and from the extent of his resources for every purpose of speculation and of action.”



“But it was in the dearer relations of nature that his mind, in which every thing was beautiful and in order, shone with all its lustre. To his father and mother his affection and assiduity were such as passed all description, and all examples that the writer of this has ever seen; here every thing of *self* was annihilated; here he was as perfect as human nature can admit. At home and to his family, he was indeed all in all. He lived in and for his parents, and he expired in their arms.

“A sincerely afflicted mind seeks a momentary consolation in drawing this imperfect sketch of his ever to be honoured and lamented friend. “W. K.”

“Gray’s Inn, Aug. 3, 1794.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

Correspondence with William Smith, Esq. (of Ireland) on the Roman Catholic Question—Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, on the same subject—Letter to William Elliot, Esq. on the Attack of the Duke of Norfolk, in the House of Lords—Letters to Mrs. Salisbury Haviland—Letter to Lord Auckland, with Remarks on his Pamphlet—Letter to William Smith, Esq.—Thoughts and Details on Scarcity—Anecdotes—Grant of a Pension—Letter to a Noble Lord in Reply to an Attack of the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale in the House of Lords.

FOR some months after the afflicting loss he had experienced, the mind of Mr. Burke was too seriously hurt by it to take so active an interest as he had hitherto done in most questions connected with public affairs; nor did his friends deem it decorous to intrude upon the almost sacred privacies of a grief so profound by solicitations for his opinion. But as he became more composed, a return to the consideration of such matters, which had long been a species of daily aliment to him, was eagerly desired by them as serving to prevent the continual intrusion of more melancholy thoughts. His communications with Ministry, however, from this time forward in a great degree ceased with the life of his son, his influence, whatever it was, being exerted through the channel of the press, and therefore wholly public.

The question of Roman Catholic Emancipation occupied then, a large share of the attention of the statesmen of England and Ireland. In the latter country, as being chiefly concerned in the result, it was of course warmly debated; the late concessions there, the continued exertions of Mr. Grattan, and the inflammatory state of politics altogether, producing in many a conviction of its necessity; in others as strong an aversion to any further indulgence. An appeal to Mr. Burke from several of his friends in Dublin, whose opinions

were either not fully formed, or who wished their doubts on the matter entirely resolved, was therefore made. Among the number was his young friend, Mr. Smith. He had now secured a seat in the legislature of his country, and being further placed in the not uncommon situation in Ireland of having one parent of the Protestant and the other of the Roman Catholic faith, and brought up a Protestant himself, he considered it no less desirable than just, to gain from such a man all the additional light he could throw upon the subject, in order to be himself enabled to act wisely and conscientiously towards his religion, towards his parent as one of the obnoxious persuasion, and towards his country. His letter on this occasion is useful to advert to for its own sake, as well as for the sake of the answer it produced.

“I am about to make a very usual return for great kindness, by imposing a further tax on him from whom I have received it. The funds, however, on which I draw, whatever modesty or prudence may induce you to allege, are universally known to be abundant. Besides, what I ask for is advice; in giving which you can enrich me without impoverishing yourself.

“You are aware that a measure of vast importance will shortly come before our Parliament. I mean that on which the Catholics have judiciously enough bestowed the title of Emancipation. I feel the magnitude of this question; and wish greatly to have upon it the assistance of your views. Your opinion I indeed anticipate; or more properly speaking, know; and what I now solicit from you is rather an outline (I cannot presume to look for more), of the grounds on which your judgment has been formed.

“The popularity of this measure seems, with many of its advocates, to be founded upon sentiments which I do not entertain. The fashionable toast of ‘Religion established; and no established religion!’ is a quaint treachery which I cannot prevail with myself to echo; nor do I concur in the impartial nonchalance of those who think the Protestant and Catholic doctrines to be both so good, that they neither care which is the best, nor very well know which is which. I suspect that this liberal inattention to specific difference might be traced to a contempt for Christianity in general. At all events, it is a liberality to which I make no pretensions; and on the contrary, if the want of it be bigotry, must admit myself a bigot. I am a Protestant, not merely because it is the faith in which I happened to be brought up, but on conviction; and not only consider the Catholic system to be erroneous, but to be infected with errors which, as well from their intrinsic character, as from their political relations, are of a tendency the most pernicious; and rather disentitle the professors of this religion to liberal indulgence, than the reverse. At least these would not, I fear, be likely to practise the toleration which they recommend; and cannot well rest their claims upon the Gospel precept. \* \* \*

“If I have spoken strongly of Catholic doctrines, their tendency and danger; it yet should seem that I have not imbibed prejudices at all hostile to the professors of that religion. My father, whose line of politics it would be my wish to pursue, as long as he was in Parliament, supported their pretensions. My mother, a most excellent woman, and all her family are Catholics; between whom and me a very cordial and affectionate intercourse subsists. But knowing my connexion with Doctor Duigeanan, you may suspect me of having taken up some of his opinions; seasoned too with a portion of his warmth and zeal. This however, I can assure you, is far from being the case. He is a well-informed, able, and, I think, upright man; with an intellect perhaps coarse—beyond all question strong. But still his views of things are very different from mine. There is something as it were dissonant, and antipathetic, in the frame and construction of our minds; and of whatever friendship there is between us, neither *idem velle*, nor *idem sentire*, are the source. Besides, he has ever held me and my understanding very cheap: and though his estimate may have been a just one, it was not calculated to seduce me into an implicit adoption of all his thoughts.

“But if the circumstance of my mother’s family being Catholic has protected me from prejudice, it has at the same time laid open sources of information, to which persons situated differently from me might not have access. If many of that persuasion be, as many are, exempt from all those prejudices, which armed with power might lead to mischief, the exemption I fear arises rather from individual character, or peculiar situation, than from the genius of the religion. They are liberal, not *because*, but *notwithstanding* they are Catholics. Besides, whatever dangerous spirit popery may be suspected to contain, is repressed and chilled, while this religion is under control and in the shade. But we know from Scripture that the smallest of all seeds, if allowed to grow and flourish, may overshadow nations.

“Perhaps the language I have been using may seem inconsistent with sentiments which you have heard me more than once avow; and you may suppose that I am writing my recantation from all favourable dispositions to the church of Rome. This, however, is not the case. I am strongly disposed to give the Catholics what they ask: I wish to be convinced that it would be right to do so; and what I have been saying merely tends to this, that they ought not to be gratified at our expense. But we should not, in an effusion of liberality, neglect our own defence; or by dismantling the fortresses of the true religion established amongst us, lay it open to the pious inroads, and with reference to their motive, perhaps laudable oppressions, which *pro salute animarum*, our Catholic brethren might think it their duty to inflict.”



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“I am presumptuous in discussing the question with you as I do; but should be more so if I were not prepared to surrender my notions, with unaffected deference and humility, to your opinion. I am not so arrogant, as from my indulging in these dissertations you might think. I do not forget that I have not been quite one year in Parliament, nor quite twenty-nine years in the world; and shall besides, in favour of the Catholics, be *convinced*, not *against*, but with my *will*. That a man’s religious opinions should abridge his civil powers (in other words that he should be mulcted for being conscientious), is a maxim which, in the abstract, I reprobate as profane; and should feel indebted to the reasoner who would show me that the opposite axiom can be brought to bear upon the subject now before us.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“I have myself observed, that since the last relaxations of the Popery law, there are certain privileges which though in theory the Catholics possess, they have not begun perfectly, if at all, to enjoy in practice. These barren and unproductive rights are worse than none at all. They exasperate and tantalize those who on the contrary should be conciliated and contented; and perhaps this provoking evil could not have arisen, if we had taken as good care of the Catholics as of the Pope; and surrounded their civil rights with a body-guard of political powers, for their protection. A certain number of these latter they indeed possess; and the question is, whether the guard be strong enough for their defence; or can be further strengthened, compatibly with a due regard to our own safety.

“Of some of the donations which we have made, I (as you know) disapprove. In giving their forty shilling freeholders the elective franchise, I think that we did wrong;\* and even doubt whether we did not lose an opportunity for depriving this grovelling class, the *plebs infima* of our country, whether Protestant or Popish, of the right (or rather abuse and wrong) of voting; and for conferring this privilege indiscriminately on twenty pound freeholders of both religions. You have had the patience to read, and the kindness to approve the tract in which I started this idea. But now the thing is done; the concession is made; and in making it we furnished an argument for the present claims. The power of forty shilling freeholders is, in fact and practice, the influence (and that it should be so is perhaps the lesser evil), of those landlords under whom they hold. It is these latter, therefore, that in thus extending the elective franchise, we have aggran-

\* This opinion does credit to Mr. Smith’s sagacity, for Ireland would now willingly get rid of the abuse if she could; it will be remembered that a measure for this purpose was introduced lately (1825) into Parliament, intended to follow the fortunes of that for the relief of the Catholics, and accordingly they were thrown out together.

dized. In finding a market for the flock, it is not the sheep, but the owner of the stock and pasture, that we serve. Thus, while Catholics are ineligible into Parliament, we may (contrary to our intention) have been aggrandizing the Protestant gentry at their expense.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ You have already observed, I believe it is in your letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, that the penal code ought not to have been even touched, except by those who were prepared for its entire, though perhaps gradual abrogation. But without disputing this, at least without disputing it directly, I may suggest that of the liberty which identifies with power, we may with propriety be frugal; lest in bestowing freedom upon others, we should be imposing chains upon ourselves. Our security and liberties ought not to be the fund, out of which, by deductions from it, the Catholic demands are to be supplied.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ But it will seldom be a sufficient reason for rejecting an application, that it is ungraciously or even insolently made. The intrinsic merits and reasonableness of the demand itself should in general be gone into. Nor though petitioners should falsely represent their circumstances to be worse than these really are, ought we merely upon this account to decline improving their situation, if it can be ameliorated with safety to ourselves. Complainants nine times out of ten magnify the alleged grievance which they are seeking to have removed, the delusions of *amour propre* first aggravate it to themselves; and their representation of what they endured again enhances upon this; in order that the supposed magnitude of their suffering may supply an argument for its removal. Resentment may also sometimes contribute its part; and induce them to exaggerate their oppressions, both to themselves, and to those whom they consider as oppressors.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ The longer the provocations last, the more exasperation and ill-blood will be produced; and the greater will be the risk which must at length perhaps be run. If then the restrictive system with respect to Catholics ought at some time to have an end, what better moment could be chosen than the present, when, from the loyal conduct which they have hitherto pursued, it may be inferred that they have not yet been stung or stimulated into disaffection; a moment in which allegiance is exposed to unprecedented perils and temptations; and swarms of innovators are busy in every quarter of the country; when old establishments are *sloping their heads to their foundations*; and all that is passing round us in the world seems to inculcate the necessity of cementing for our own security *id firmissimum imperium, quo obedientes gaudent?*

\* \* \* \* \*

“ We ought not, if it can be avoided, to inflict upon our brethren



the unkindness which she\* feared from imperious enemies, for her son; we ought not to hold the cup of privilege to their lips; and then stint them to a mere relish, better calculated to inflame their thirst, than to assuage it. This is a moment not merely for doing strict and penurious justice; but for gratifying feelings, and exciting zeal. Suppose the Catholics are now requiring, not what may be called the necessaries, and ordinary sustenance of civil life, but a regale of honours and distinctions, to please the palate and soothe the pride of their ambition; why should they not ask this? why should they not obtain it, if it can be given with safety? if it can be given, without manifest and very serious danger? Why should Catholics be doomed to thirst in vain for honours, the thirst for which is a main incentive to public spirit, and has perhaps its origin in public virtue? Why should the genial current of their fair affections and natural appetites be frozen? Or how at least can we who freeze it, in the same breath require that it shall flow warmly for our defence? Can we prevent a Catholic from feeling that he is as well entitled by nature to distinction as we are? that he is as well qualified, as any Protestant, for filling an eminent situation with credit to himself, and advantage to the public? Or what more serious peril can we well incur, than that of convincing this great body of our countrymen that, under the present order of things, they must stifle their fair ambition, for that we consider their depression as a *sine quâ non* of our safety?

\* \* \* \* \*

“I have stated my difficulties, in order that you should remove them, or indicate a road to liberality, by taking which I may avoid them. Much in fact of what I have been considering as arduous, you may show me to be mere mole-hills, which an erroneous view of the subject has magnified into mountains. Or, as I said before, leaving these mountains, as Mahomet left his, in their own place, you may, instead of going to them as he did, point out another road; a pass, by means of which we can elude them all. Accordingly (indeed at all events), I am far from expecting that you should discuss my objections *seriatim*; or regularly refute them all. In perusing them without impatience, you will have been sufficiently indulgent. What I ask for is your opinion; and such objections as you pass unnoticed, I shall consider you to have overruled.”

The reply of Mr. Burke bears date January 29th, 1795, and being handed about in Dublin, found its way into the press, though without permission of the writer or his correspondent. He does not enter into the detail of the question with all the minuteness perhaps which was solicited, but gives his views upon it generally, and pleads for the removal of the whole of the disabilities of the Roman Catholic body. Speaking of their religion itself, he applies to it the language of men of sense and statesmen—that as the faith

\* An allusion to Andromache's fears for the captivity of her son Astyanax.



of four-fifths of the community of the country, it should not be hostilely treated—that as a thing in itself irremovable by either force or persuasion, it should be the business of wisdom not to bicker and contend with, but to make the most of it.

He urges unanimity upon the Christian world, as now more than ever necessary when the foundations of christianity itself were attacked, and that, were it possible to dispute, rail, and persecute the Roman Catholics out of their prejudices, it is not probable they would take refuge in ours, but rather in an indifference to all religion; and that were the Catholic religion destroyed by infidels, it is absurd to suppose that the Protestant church could long endure.

“All the principal religions in Europe,” he says, “stand upon one common bottom. The support, that the whole, or the favoured parts, may have in the secret dispensations of Providence, it is impossible to say; but humanly speaking, they are all *prescriptive* religions. They have all stood long enough to make prescription, and its chain of legitimate prejudices, their main stay. The people, who compose the four grand divisions of christianity, have now their religion as an habit, and upon authority, and not on disputation; as all men, who have their religion derived from their parents, and the fruits of education, *must* have it; however the one, more than the other, may be able to reconcile his faith to his own reason, or to that of other men.

“Depend upon it they must all be supported, or they must all fall in the crash of a common ruin. The Catholics are the far more numerous part of the Christians in your country; and how can christianity (that is now the point in issue) be supported under the persecution, or even under the discountenance, of the greater number of Christians? It is a great truth, and which in one of the debates I stated as strongly as I could to the House of Commons in the last session, that if the Catholic religion is destroyed by the infidels, it is a most contemptible and absurd idea, that this, or any Protestant church, can survive that event. Therefore my humble and decided opinion is, that all the three religions, prevalent more or less in various parts of these islands, ought all, in subordination to the legal establishments, as they stand in the several countries, to be all countenanced, protected, and cherished; and that in Ireland particularly the Roman Catholic religion should be upheld in high respect and veneration; and should be, in its place, provided with all the means of making it a blessing to the people who profess it; that it ought to be cherished as a good (though not as the most preferable good, if a choice was now to be made), and not tolerated as an inevitable evil.

“If this be my opinion as to the Catholic religion, as a sect, you must see, that I must be to the last degree averse to put a man, upon that account, upon a bad footing with relation to the privileges, which the fundamental laws of this country give him as a

subject. I am the more serious on the positive encouragement to be given to this religion (always, however, as secondary), because the serious and earnest belief and practice of it by its professors forms, as things stand, the most effectual barrier, if not the sole barrier against jacobinism. The Catholics form the great body of the lower ranks of your community; and no small part of those classes of the middling, that come nearest to them. You know that the seduction of that part of mankind from the principles of religion, morality, subordination, and social order, is the great object of the jacobins. Let them grow lax, sceptical, careless, and indifferent with regard to religion, and so sure as we have an existence, it is not a zealous Anglican or Scottish church principle, but direct jacobinism, which will enter into that breach. Two hundred years dreadfully spent in experiments to force that people to change the form of their religion have proved fruitless. You have now your choice, for full four-fifths of your people, of the Catholic religion or jacobinism. If things appear to you to stand on this alternative, I think you will not be long in making your option.

\* \* \* \* \*

“As to the capacity of sitting in Parliament, after all the capacities for voting, for the army, for the navy, for the professions, for civil offices, it is a dispute *de lanâ caprinâ*, in my poor opinion; at least on the part of those who oppose it. In the first place, this admission to office, and this exclusion from Parliament, on the principle of an exclusion from political power, is the very reverse of the principle of the English test act. If I were to form a judgment from experience rather than theory, I should doubt much whether the capacity for, or even the possession of, a seat in Parliament, did really convey much of power to be properly called political. I have sat there, with some observation, for nine and twenty years, or thereabouts. The power of a Member of Parliament is uncertain and indirect: and if power rather than splendour and fame were the object, I should think that any of the principal clerks in office (to say nothing of their superiors, several of whom are disqualified by law for seats in Parliament) possess far more power than nine-tenths of the members of the House of Commons. I might say this of men, who seemed from their fortunes, their weight in their country, and their talents, to be persons of figure there; and persons too not in opposition to the prevailing party in government.

“But be they what they will, on a fair canvass of the several prevailing parliamentary interests in Ireland, I cannot, out of the three hundred members, of whom the Irish Parliament is composed, discover, that above three, or at the utmost four, Catholics would be returned to the House of Commons. But suppose they should amount to thirty, that is to a tenth part, (a thing I hold impossible for a long series of years, and never very likely to happen),



what is this to those, who are to balance them in the one House, and the clear and settled majority in the other? For I think it absolutely impossible that, in the course of many years, above four or five peers should be created of that communion. In fact, the exclusion of them seems to be the only way to mark jealousy and suspicion, and not to provide security in any way."

The measures now contemplated to benefit Ireland by the new Lord Lieutenant Earl Fitzwilliam, being disapproved by the English ministry, the disagreement unhappily terminated in his recall, and the ferment occasioned by this impolitic act was terminated only by the rebellion. Heated discussions were in the mean time carried on in Dublin in public assemblages of the Catholics and Anti-Catholics, the former in Francis-street, the latter in College Green: a debate on the subject had likewise taken place in the House of Commons. In this situation Mr. Burke wrote his *Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe*, who had sent him his speech on that occasion, and he urges several new arguments to support the view of it, which he and his friend the baronet had taken. His feelings on the change in the Irish administration were of the most desponding nature, and more so in private conversation than he thought proper to publish.—

"I really thought that in the total of the late circumstances with regard to persons, to things, to principles, and to measures, was to be found a conjuncture favourable to the introduction and to the perpetuation of a general harmony, producing a general strength, which to that hour Ireland was never so happy as to enjoy. My sanguine hopes are blasted, and I must consign my feelings on that terrible disappointment to the same patience in which I have been obliged to bury the vexation I suffered on the defeat of the other great, just, and honourable causes, in which I have had some share; and which have given more of dignity than of peace and advantage to a long and laborious life."

Immediately after this letter had been dispatched to its destination, he thought it necessary to defend himself from an attack of the Duke of Norfolk in the House of Lords, who in the debate concerning Earl Fitzwilliam, took occasion to advert to him as the cause of that nobleman's secession from the party. The number, variety, and magnitude of Mr. Burke's talents, he said, were known, and he fully admitted them all, but they had not been put to a right use: by the book which he had published he had provoked dangerous replies, particularly that of Mr. Paine; yet he continued to wage war against Whig principles, and against the spirit and the securities of freedom.

The answer, which is couched in a strain of sarcastic humour, forms a *Letter to William Elliot, Esq.* He confesses he is somewhat obstinate in adhering to the opinions and party with which he set out in life, instead of being lectured into the new opinions of a new party, some of whom were not born into the world, and



all of them were children, when he entered into the connexion—that he continues somewhat purblind to the blessings of French freedom, and must persevere in the path he had chosen, that is, to try to save his Grace, and persons like his Grace, from themselves.—“I admit, indeed, that my praises of the British government, loaded with all its incumbrances; clogged with its peers and its beef; its parsons and its pudding; its commons and its beer, and its dull slavish liberty of going about just as one pleases, had something to provoke a jockey of Norfolk, who was inspired with the resolute ambition of becoming a citizen of France.”

Adverting to the toasts, witticisms, and allusions frequently made to him by the political clubs and associations of the day, as well as in the speeches of Mr. Erskine, in the late trials for high treason and on other occasions at the bar, he gives the reins to his peculiar fancy.

“Mr. Erskine supplied something, I allow, from the stores of his imagination, in metamorphosing the jovial toasts of clubs, into solemn special arguments at the bar. So far the thing showed talent: however I must still prefer the bar of the tavern to the other bar. The toasts at the first hand were better than the arguments at the second. Even when the toasts began to grow old as sarcasms, they were washed down with still older pricked election port; then the acid of the wine made some amends for the want of any thing piquant in the wit. But when his Grace gave them a second transformation, and brought out the vapid stuff, which had wearied the clubs and disgusted the courts; the drug, made up of the bottoms of rejected bottles, all smelling so wofully of the cork and the cask, and of every thing except the honest old lamp, and when that sad draught had been farther infected with the gaol pollution of the Old Bailey, and was dashed and brewed, and ineffectually stunned again into a senatorial exordium in the House of Lords, I found all the high flavour and mantling of my honours, tasteless, flat, and stale. Unluckily, the new tax on wine is felt even in the greatest fortunes, and his Grace submits to take up with the heel-taps of Mr. Erskine.”

Touching sarcastically on the inexperience of many of the juvenile politicians of the day, who would fain teach him what true whiggism, freedom, and constitutional principles were; and on the substantial knowledge of such persons as the Duke, in certain *practices* no doubt equally constitutional, he says—

“I give due credit to the censorial brow, to the broad phylacteries, and to the imposing gravity of these magisterial rabbins and doctors in the cabala of political science. I admit that ‘wisdom is as the grey hair to man, and that learning is like honorable old age.’ But, at a time when liberty is a good deal talked of, perhaps I might be excused, if I caught something of the general indocility. It might not be surprising, if I lengthened my chain a link or two, and in an age of relaxed discipline, gave a trifling indulgence to

my own notions. If that could be allowed, perhaps I might sometimes (by accident, and without an unpardonable crime) trust as much to my own very careful and very laborious, though, perhaps, somewhat purblind disquisitions, as to their soaring, intuitive, eagle-eyed authority; but the modern liberty is a precious thing. It must not be profaned by too vulgar an use. It belongs only to the chosen few, who are born to the hereditary representation of the whole democracy, and who leave nothing at all, no, not the offal, to us poor outcasts of the plebeian race.

“Amongst those gentlemen who came to authority, as soon, or sooner than they came of age, I do not mean to include his Grace, With all those native titles to empire over our minds which distinguish the others, he has a large share of experience. He certainly ought to understand the British Constitution better than I do. He has studied it in the fundamental part. For one election I have seen, he has been concerned in twenty. Nobody is less of a visionary theorist; nobody has drawn his speculations more from practice. No peer has condescended to superintend with more vigilance the declining franchises of the poor Commons. ‘With thrice great Hermes he has outwatched the bear.’ Often have his candles been burned to the snuff, and glimmered and stunk in the sockets, whilst he grew pale at his constitutional duties; long, sleepless nights has he wasted, long, laborious, shiftless journeys has he made, and great sums has he expended, in order to secure the purity, the independence, and the sobriety of elections, and to give a check, if possible, to the ruinous charges that go nearly to the destruction of the right of election itself.

“Amidst these his labours, his Grace will be pleased to forgive me, if my zeal, less enlightened to be sure than his by midnight lamps and studies, has presumed to talk too favourably of this Constitution, and even to say something sounding like approbation of that body, which has the honour to reckon his Grace at the head of it. Those who dislike this partiality, or, if his Grace pleases, this flattery of mine, have a comfort at hand. I may be refuted and brought to shame by the most convincing of all refutations, a practical refutation. Every individual peer for himself may show, that I was ridiculously wrong; the whole body of those noble persons may refute me for the whole corps. If they please, they are more powerful advocates against themselves, than a thousand scribblers like me can be in their favour. If I were even possessed of those powers which his Grace, in order to heighten my offence, is pleased to attribute to me, there would be little difference. The eloquence of Mr. Erskine might save Mr. — from the gallows, but no eloquence could save Mr. Jackson\* from the effects of his own potion.”

Remembering the influence which he exerted over the public

\* The clergyman, who being apprehended on a treasonable mission to Ireland, tried and convicted, poisoned himself in prison.



mind, on nearly all the great questions in which he took a leading part, and most of all on the French Revolution, the idea thrown out in the following sketch applies to no man so much as to himself.

“How often has public calamity been arrested, on the very brink of ruin, by the seasonable energy of a single man! Have we no such man amongst us? I am as sure as I am of my being, that one vigorous mind without office, without situation, without public functions of any kind (at a time when the want of such a thing is felt as I am sure it is), I say one such man confiding in the aid of God, and full of just reliance on his own fortitude, vigour, enterprise and perseverance, would first draw to him some few like himself, and then that multitudes hardly thought to be in existence would appear and troop about him.

“If I saw this auspicious beginning, baffled and frustrated as I am, yet on the very verge of a timely grave, abandoned abroad, and desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my guide,\* yet thus, even thus, I would rake up the fire under all the ashes that oppress it. I am no longer patient of the public eye; nor am I of force to win my way, and to jostle and elbow in a crowd. But even in solitude something may be done for society. The meditations of the closet have infected senates with a subtle frenzy, and inflamed armies with the brands of the furies. The cure might come from the same source as the distemper. I would add my part to those who would animate the people (whose hearts are yet right) to new exertions in the old cause.”

About this time he had to lament another severe family affliction in the death of Major Haviland the husband of his niece, who having accompanied his regiment, the 45th, to the West Indies (from a sense of duty; though contrary to the wishes of his family), died at Martinique, just as he was gazetted a colonel. Mrs. Haviland, who remained at home, received the melancholy intelligence of being a widow shortly before she became a mother. To this sad event the following letters of Mr. Burke, addressed with two exceptions to the senior Mrs. Haviland, chiefly relate.

“My dearest Madam,

“You know that I partake from the very bottom of my soul the affliction you suffer. It is not my relation to him, and through him to you, that alone affects me. I loved him as a friend, and I loved you as a friend, both of you most sincerely, before we had any other connexion: but sorrow and suffering are our lot; and the same God who makes the dispensation, must be our comfort under it.

“As to the excellent poor creature here who approaches to her

\* His son.



time very nearly, we cannot possibly trust her with what I fear too much is the real state of her case. She is far advanced, and if she hears it before she gets to town and has help at hand, I think it may be death to her, so we thank you most cordially for the cold.\* She was dressed; and nothing else could hinder her going to you. May the Almighty strengthen us all, and bow us in this and in all things to his wise disposal. May every blessing attend you. Adieu, and believe me ever faithfully and affectionately yours, and Mrs. Aston's sincere friend and obliged humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“Mrs. Burke is to you both with all her usual affection.”

“TO OLIVER DOLPHIN, ESQ. LOUGHREA, IRELAND.

“My dear Sir,

“Your humanity cannot fail to be affected with the subject on which I take the liberty to write. Our unhappy family furnishes little else than disasters to ourselves, and subjects of grief to those who are compassionate enough to be our friends. The poor object of your protection, my niece Mary Haviland, could hardly call herself a wife when she became a widow. Major Haviland, who had been just appointed a colonel, died before his appointment could reach him in the West Indies; she is within a few weeks of her lying-in, and as yet I have not informed her of her unhappy fate. I tremble to do it from the effect it may have upon her in her present state, but we cannot conceal it above a day longer at the utmost. I am bound to apprise you of every thing concerning her, who have ever taken so kind and paternal an interest in this friendless and excellent creature.

“You have protected her as an orphan; I now must owe to you the same care of her affairs as a widow. Mrs. Burke has brought her to town that in case she should be suddenly taken ill by this news, she may have help from the physicians, on whom above all others our poor Mary has the greatest reliance. Your son, one of the finest young men, and the most promising for parts and morals that I know, did us the favour of affording a day at our house before his departure for the sea coast.

“I am ever, with sincere respect and affection,

“My dear Sir,

“Your most faithful and obedient servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“London, August 5, 1795,

“I shall return to the country in a day or two, whither you will be pleased to direct to me.”

\* An excuse made by Mrs. Haviland, to avoid an interview with her daughter-in-law, just after the news of her loss had arrived.

( No date, but about 7th or 8th of August 1795.)

“ My dear Mrs. Haviland,

“ I waited to see how things turned out with your poor child before I troubled you on the subject. A melancholy one it is to us all. She was not made acquainted with her irreparable loss until yesterday morning. She had from our manner been prepared to expect bad news of some kind or other; and the unfortunate business was opened so gradually that though grief beyond expression was caused by it (a thing inevitable in a case of so heavy a loss falling on so much sensibility) yet there was nothing of surprise. An agony of sorrow continued the whole day; and her night was not good. Dr. Poinan, in whom she has much confidence, has seen her since, and he had been previously consulted. He was of opinion that the communication might be more safely made to her before her lying in, than after or very near the time. It was impossible to conceal it, even had it been advisable so to do, for many days longer. He is not apprehensive of danger in the least degree.

“ I have been in town the whole day almost to this minute; since my return, I have been at her lodgings, where she is likely to be quiet. The air is good and the family kind and attentive. Mrs. Burke feels for you with a most tender and cordial sympathy; as I do very truly as much as an old heart worn out with incurable affliction can do, I am with my best love to Mrs. Aston,

“ My dear Madam,

“ Your affectionate, old, miserable friend,

“ EDMUND BURKE.”

“ Newington, Thursday.”

The following is to his niece, written some short time after the birth of her son.

“ September 4, 1795.

“ My dear little Mary,

“ Your aunt goes to London to see you. I cannot attend her,\* else you may be sure I should have great comfort in seeing you and your little one. But I cannot let her go without telling you that I love you very dearly; and that it is my earnest prayer to Almighty God that you may live long and happily; and that you may see your son† a support to your old age; an honour and satisfaction to you, and an useful man to his friends and country; and that at a very long day *he* may close *your* eyes, not as I have done those of your admirable cousin. Adieu, my dear child! my most cordial congratulations.

“ Believe me, most affectionately yours,

“ EDMUND BURKE.”

\* The cause was a visit to Mr. Burke, from some members of the royal family of France:—Louis XVIII., and the Dukes de Berri and D'Angoulême.

† The present Mr. Thomas Haviland Burke.

The following adverts to a pecuniary offer made at this period by Mrs. Haviland, when aware that her friend was suffering under some temporary difficulty ; it was, however, declined, and returned to her in this note.

“ My dear Madam,

“ We think this *too much* at any time ; *now*, we will not take it ; on your return we will think of it ; we do not refuse but postpone it, for as I know pretty nearly how two things stand, we do not at this time want it ; when we do, I assure you solemnly and sincerely we will call for it. We shall write to you from Bath.

“ I am ever to you and our dear Nabby,

“ Your most faithful and affectionate friend,

“ JANE BURKE and E. BURKE.

“ Sunday.”

The following is of a subsequent date, by some months.

“ My dear Madam,

“ Mrs. Burke and I have just heard through their usual kind attentions, of the arrival of our worthy physician and friends of Bath, at the metropolis of this district. A thousand thanks to you and to them, there and here. Most unfortunately to me I am obliged to be in London to-morrow. But if you and they will suffer Mrs. Burke to represent me you will dine here with those gentlemen to-morrow (Sunday) ; and if the continuance of the good weather should tempt them to remain in this pleasant country, I shall, please God, be back on Tuesday evening, and shall have the satisfaction of engaging you and them for that day also. All the ladies here kiss your and Mrs. Aston’s hands. They must not talk of kissing the gentlemen,—no, not the younger Mr. Fitzherbert,\* though I know they long for it.

“ Ever yours,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Saturday.”

Toward the end of the month of October (28th), Mr. Burke received a polite note from Lord Auckland, dated from Eden Farm, Kent, saying that “ though in the stormy ocean of the last twenty-three years they had seldom sailed on the same tack, there had been nothing hostile in their signals or manœuvres, and on his part at least a strong disposition toward friendly and respectful sentiments. Under a similar influence now he begged leave to send him a small work which exhibited his fair and full opinions on the arduous circumstances of the moment.”

The reply, sent to his lordship two days afterward, wholly dissents from his views as exhibited in this work, and expresses that dissent in the strongest terms he can use. The first paragraph, it will be observed, displays that desponding and occasionally queru-

\* A near relative of Mrs. Haviland.



lous tone which he assumed when subdued by private grief, or by the contemplation of further public calamity from the ill success of our own and the arms of our allies against republican France on the Continent, where, above all other places, he urged, success was most to be desired. "Buried in the anticipated grave of a feeble old age, forgetting and forgotten," must therefore be taken as words of course. They could not, with any truth, be applied to himself, whose mental energies were constantly acting through the press in as strong and as bright a manner as they ever were; whose doctrines were constantly in discussion; whose name was daily bandied about in every form of publication from the newspaper to the quarto, a theme of alternate praise and censure, even much more than most of the ministers of the country; and from whose thoughts public topics were never for any length of time absent.—

"My dear Lord,

"I am perfectly sensible of the very flattering honour you have done me in turning any part of your attention towards a dejected old man, buried in the anticipated grave of a feeble old age, forgetting and forgotten in an obscure and melancholy retreat.

"In this retreat I have nothing relative to this world to do but to study all the tranquillity that in the state of my mind I am capable of. To that end I find it but too necessary to call to my aid an oblivion of most of the circumstances pleasant and unpleasant of my life; to think as little, and indeed to know as little as I can of every thing that is doing about me; and, above all, to divert my mind from all presagings and prognostications of what I must (if I let my speculations loose) consider as of absolute necessity to happen after my death, and possibly even before it. Your address to the public which you have been so good as to send to me, obliges me to break in upon that plan, and to look a little on what is behind, and very much on what is before me. It creates in my mind a variety of thoughts, and all of them unpleasant.

"It is true, my Lord, what you say, that through our public life, we have generally sailed on somewhat different tacks. We have so undoubtedly, and we should do so still, if I had continued longer to keep the sea. In that difference you rightly observe that I have always done justice to your skill and ability as a navigator, and to your good intentions towards the safety of the cargo and of the ship's company. I cannot say now that we are on different tacks. There would be no propriety in the metaphor. I can sail no longer. My vessel cannot be said to be even in port. She is wholly condemned and broken up. To have an idea of that vessel you must call to mind what you have often seen on the Kentish road. Those planks of tough and hardy oak that used for years to brave the buffets of the Bay of Biscay, are now turned with their warped grain and empty trunnion holes into very wretched pales for the enclosure of a wretched farm-yard.

“The style of your pamphlet, and the eloquence and power of composition you display in it, are such as do great honour to your talents; and in conveying any other sentiments would give me very great pleasure. Perhaps I do not very perfectly comprehend your purpose, and the drift of your arguments. If I do not—pray do not attribute my mistake to want of candour, but to want of sagacity. I confess your address to the public, together with other accompanying circumstances, has filled me with a degree of grief and dismay which I cannot find words to express. If the plan of politics there recommended, pray excuse my freedom, should be adopted by the King’s Councils and by the good people of this kingdom (as so recommended undoubtedly it will) nothing can be the consequence but utter and irretrievable ruin to the Ministry, to the Crown, to the succession, to the importance, to the independence, to the very existence of this country.

“This is my feeble perhaps, but clear, positive, decided, long and maturely-reflected, and frequently declared opinion, from which all the events which have lately come to pass, so far from turning me, have tended to confirm beyond the power of alteration, even by your eloquence and authority. I find, my dear Lord, that you think some persons who are not satisfied with the securities of a Jacobin peace, to be persons of intemperate minds. I may be, and I fear I am with you in that description: but pray, my Lord, recollect that very few of the causes which make men intemperate, can operate upon me. Sanguine hopes, vehement desires, inordinate ambition, implacable animosity, party attachments, or party interests; all these with me have no existence. For myself or for a family (alas! I have none), I have nothing to hope or to fear in this world. I am attached by principle, inclination, and gratitude to the King, and to the present Ministry.

“Perhaps you may think that my animosity to Opposition is the cause of my dissent on seeing the politics of Mr. Fox (which while I was in the world I combated by every instrument which God had put into my hands, and in every situation in which I had taken part), so completely adopted in your Lordship’s book: but it was with pain I broke with that great man for ever in that cause—and I assure you, it is not without pain that I differ with your Lordship on the same principles. But it is of no concern. I am far below the region of those great and tempestuous passions. I feel nothing of the intemperance of mind. It is rather sorrow and dejection than anger.

“Once more my best thanks for your very polite attention, and do me the favour to believe me with the most perfect sentiments of respect and regard,

“My dear Lord,

“Your Lordship’s most obedient and humble servant,

“E. BURKE.



The work thus sent and acknowledged was a pamphlet intended to be published in London on the same day, under the title of "*Remarks on the Apparent Circumstances of the War in the Fourth Week of October, 1795.*" Its main purpose was to insinuate, for nothing was distinctly recommended, the propriety of peace with France—that the thing was desirable and the moment favourable; both which propositions are refuted by his correspondent with much sarcastic humour and vigour of reasoning in the "*Fourth Letter on a Regicide Peace,*" addressed to Earl Fitzwilliam, which though published only in his posthumous works, was the first of the series begun on that subject. Lord Auckland, therefore, has the merit, indirectly, of having been the occasion of writing these able essays; their opinions, it will be observed, were nearly as opposite as they had been on the American war; and on both subjects it will not require much deliberation to decide to whom is to be given the award of superior sagacity.—

"A piece has been sent to me," he says in the letter just mentioned, "called '*Remarks on the apparent Circumstances of the War in the Fourth Week of October, 1795,*' with a French motto—*Que faire encore une fois dans une telle nuit?—Attendre le jour.* The very title seemed to me striking and peculiar, and to announce something uncommon.

"In the time I have lived to, I always seem to walk on enchanted ground. Every thing is new, and, according to the fashionable phrase, revolutionary. In the former days authors valued themselves upon the maturity and fulness of their deliberations. Accordingly they predicted (perhaps with more arrogance than reason) an eternal duration to their works. The quite contrary is our present fashion. Writers value themselves now on the instability of their opinions, and the transitory life of their productions. On this kind of credit the modern institutors open their schools. They write for youth, and it is sufficient if the instruction '*lasts as long as a present love,*'—or as '*the painted silks and cottons of the season.*'

"The doctrines in this work are applied, for their standard, with great exactness to the shortest possible periods both of conception and duration. The title is, '*Some Remarks on the apparent Circumstances of the War in the Fourth Week of October, 1795.*' The time is critically chosen. A month or so earlier would have made it the anniversary of a bloody Parisian September, when the French massacre one another. A day or two later would have carried it into a London November, the gloomy month, in which it is said by a pleasant author that Englishmen hang and drown themselves. In truth, this work has a tendency to alarm us with symptoms of public suicide. However, there is one comfort to be taken even from the gloomy time of year. It is a rotting season. If what is brought to market is not good, it is not likely to keep long. Even buildings run up in haste with untempered mortar in



that humid weather, if they are ill-contrived tenements, do not threaten long to encumber the earth.

“The author tells us (and I believe he is the very first author that ever told such a thing to his readers) ‘that the *entire fabric* of his speculations might be overset by unforeseen vicissitudes;’ and what is far more extraordinary, ‘that even the *whole* consideration might be *varied whilst he was writing those pages.*’ Truly, in my poor judgment, this circumstance formed a very substantial motive for his not publishing those ill-considered considerations at all. He ought to have followed the good advice of his motto, *Que faire encore dans une telle nuit?—Attendre le jour.* He ought to have waited till he had got a little more day-light on this subject. Night itself is hardly darker than the fogs of that time.

“Finding the *last week* in October so particularly referred to, and not perceiving any particular event relative to the war, which happened on any of the days in that week, I thought it possible that they were marked by some astrological superstition, to which the greatest politicians have been subject. I therefore had recourse to my Rider’s Almanac. There I found indeed something that characterized the work, and that gave directions concerning the sudden political and natural variations, and for eschewing the maladies, that are most prevalent in that aguish intermittent season, ‘the last week of October.’ On that week the sagacious astrologer, Rider, in his note on the third column of the calendar side, teaches us to expect ‘*variable and cold weather;*’ but instead of encouraging us to trust ourselves to the haze and mist, and doubtful lights of that changeable week, on the answerable part of the opposite page, he gives us a salutary caution (indeed it is very nearly in the words of the author’s motto): ‘*Avoid (says he) being out late at night, and in foggy weather, for a cold now caught may last the whole winter.*’ This ingenious author, who disdained the prudence of the almanac, walked out in the very fog he complains of, and has led us to a very unseasonable airing at that time. Whilst this noble writer, by the vigour of an excellent constitution formed for the violent changes he prognosticates, may shake off the importunate rheum and malignant influenza of this disagreeable week, a whole Parliament may go on spitting and snivelling, and wheezing and coughing, during a whole session. All this from listening to variable, hebdomadal politicians, who run away from their opinions without giving us a month’s warning; and for not listening to the wise and friendly admonitions of Dr. Cardamus Rider, who never apprehends he may change his opinions before his pen is out of his hand, but always enables us to lay in, at least, a year’s stock of useful information.

“At first I took comfort. I said to myself, that if I should, as I fear I must, oppose the doctrines of *the last week of October*, it is probable, that, by this time, they are no longer those of the eminent writer to whom they are attributed. He gives us hopes,

that long before this he may have embraced the direct contrary sentiments. If I am found in a conflict with those of the last week of October, I may be in full agreement with those of the last week in December, or in the first week of January, 1796. But a second edition, and a French translation (for the benefit, I must suppose, of the new Regicide Directory) have let down a little of these flattering hopes. We and the Directory know that the author, whatever changes his works seemed made to indicate, like a weather-cock grown rusty, remains just where he was in the last week of last October. It is true, that his protest against binding him to his opinions, and his reservation of a right to whatever opinions he pleases, remain in their full force. This variability is pleasant, and shows a fertility of fancy;

“Yet, doing all justice to the sportive variability of these weekly, daily, or hourly speculators, shall I be pardoned, if I attempt a word on the part of us simple country folk? It is not good for *us*, however it may be so for great statesmen, that we should be treated with variable politics. I consider different relations as prescribing a different conduct. I allow that, in transactions with an enemy, a Minister may, and often must, vary his demands with the day, and possibly with the hour. With an enemy, a fixed plan, variable arrangements. This is the rule the nature of the transaction prescribes.

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“Such is the spirit of the proceedings in the doubtful and transitory state of things between enmity and friendship. In this change the subjects of the transformation are by nature carefully wrapped up in their cocoons. The gay ornament of summer is not seemly in his aurelia state. This mutability is allowed to a foreign negociator; but when a great politician condescends publicly to instruct his own countrymen on a matter which may fix their fate for ever, his opinions ought not to be diurnal, or even weekly. These ephemerides of politics are not made for our slow and coarse understandings. Our appetite demands a *piece of resistance*. We require some food that will stick to the ribs. We call for sentiments to which we can attach ourselves; sentiments in which we can take an interest; sentiments on which we can warm, on which we can ground some confidence in ourselves or in others. We do not want a largess of inconstancy. Poor souls, we have enough of that sort of poverty at home. There is a difference too between deliberation and doctrine: a man ought to be decided in his opinions before he attempts to teach. His fugitive lights may serve himself in some unknown region, but they cannot free us from the effects of the error into which we have been betrayed. His active Will-o'-the-Wisp may be gone, nobody can guess whither, whilst he leaves us bemired and benighted in the bog.”

It was about this time that his ingenious friend, Mr. Smith, who had distinguished himself in the Irish House of Commons by a speech in favour of Roman Catholic emancipation in the spirit of the advice of his great correspondent, printed and sent it to him. There is something at once very affecting and eloquent in the first paragraph of the reply of Burke; it alludes of course to the loss of his son.—

“My dear Sir,

“I could not without ingratitude defer my acknowledgments of your letter, which breathes the very spirit of sympathy and condolence. Others have offered me comfort, but not of a kind that I could accept. You alone have touched the chord to which my feelings vibrate; and touched it the more soothingly because you have touched it sadly.—Yes;—the life which has been so embittered cannot long endure.—The grave will soon close over me and my dejections.—But I will not make so ill a return for your kindness as to overcast your young mind with the gloom that covers mine.

“I have read your speech with the greatest satisfaction. Yet I am assured by some who heard you, that it is not done justice to in the report. Be this as it may, take my word for it you will never live to repent of the vote which you have given, or to blush for the arguments with which you have supported your opinion. They are free from all the jacobinic impurity of our day; and drawn from the pure and genuine sources of the constitution. The allusion with which you open to what had been said by a member who preceded you in the debate is a very happy one; and gives a spirited air of *impromptu* to the entire speech. It seems to show that though your general topics might have been revolved, your ideas were allowed to arrange and clothe themselves on the spot. *Lucan* had little notion that he was expressing a great political and moral truth, when he wrote that line of which you have made so felicitous a use.\* You had already apprized me that you were a Christ Church man; but I must give you credit for having turned this fact to so good and argumentative a purpose.

“In tracing any of your reasoning to me, as having supplied its source, you do me an honour which I might be proud of, but which I can scarcely claim. Unless in a passage in which you suggest that the half citizen might become whole Jacobin, I meet with no argument which recalls any thing that I had written to my mind. I have about as much share in the merits of your speech, as the bell-ringer had in the merits of the sermon to which he had been summoning a congregation. What assistance you may

\* ——— *imague tellus*  
*Siat quia summa fugit.*

Used for the purpose of showing that superficial change may produce fundamental stability.



have received from your good father, to whom I beg to offer my respects, I cannot say. I am aware that you are treading in his political footsteps; and I congratulate *you* on having such a pattern; and *him* on having such an imitator.

“Pardon the length of this letter. I little thought when I began it that I should have an apology of this kind to offer.—Adieu!

“Yours, &c. &c.

“EDMUND BURKE.

“To Wm. Smith, Esq.”

Considerable distress arising about this time from the dearness of provisions, and many remedial schemes being in consequence proposed for the adoption of government, he collected and addressed to Mr. Pitt in November of this year, “Thoughts and Details on Scarcity.” In this tract are expounded, in an intelligible manner, some of the doctrines of political economists bearing upon agriculture as a trade. He adverts likewise to the absurdity of some of the schemes proposed to be carried into effect, such as settling a maximum of prices, regulating the wages of labour between farmer and servant by authority, and establishing public granaries in towns by government to supply the wants of the people at a fixed price. To those who are most clamorous in a dear season, he puts the argument thus—

“The cry of the people in cities and towns, though unfortunately, from a fear of their multitude and combination, the most regarded, ought in fact to be the least attended to on this subject; for citizens are in a state of utter ignorance of the means by which they are to be fed, and they contribute little or nothing, except in an infinitely circuitous manner, to their own maintenance. They are “*Fruges consumere nati.*” They are to be heard with great respect and attention upon matters within their province, that is, on trades and manufactures; but on any thing that relates to agriculture, they are to be listened to with the same reverence which we pay to the dogmas of other ignorant and presumptuous men.

“If any one were to tell them, that they were to give in an account of all the stock in their shops; that attempts would be made to limit their profits, or raise the price of the labouring manufacturers upon them; or recommend to government, out of a capital from the public revenues, to set up a shop of the same commodities in order to rival them and keep them to reasonable dealing, they would very soon see the impudence, injustice, and oppression of such a course. They would not be mistaken; but they are of opinion that agriculture is to be subject to other laws, and to be governed by other principles.

“A greater and more ruinous mistake cannot be fallen into than that the trades of agriculture and grazing can be conducted upon

any other than the common principles of commerce; namely, that the producer should be permitted and even expected to look to all possible profit, which without fraud or violence he can make; to turn plenty or scarcity to the best advantage he can; to keep back or to bring forward his commodities at pleasure; to account to no one for his stock or for his gain. On any other terms he is the slave of the consumer; and that he should be so is of no benefit to the consumer."

On the general principle of legislative interference on such matters, particularly in seasons of scarcity, he says—

"In that state of affairs and of the public with relation to them, the first thing that government owes to us, the people, is *information*; the next is timely coercion;—the one to guide our judgment, the other to regulate our tempers.

"To provide for us in our necessities is not in the power of government. It would be a vain presumption in statesmen to think they can do it. The people maintain them, and not they the people. It is in the power of government to prevent much evil; it can do very little positive good in this or perhaps in any thing else. It is not only so of the state and statesmen, but of all the classes and descriptions of the rich—they are the pensioners of the poor, and are maintained by their superfluity. They are under an absolute, hereditary, and indefeasible dependence on those who labour and are miscalled the poor.

"The labouring people are only poor because they are numerous. Numbers in their nature imply poverty. In a fair distribution among a vast multitude none can have much. That class of dependent pensioners called the rich is so extremely small, that if all their throats were cut, and a distribution made of all they consume in the year, it would not give a bit of bread and cheese for one night's supper to those who labour, and who in reality feed both the pensioners and themselves.

"But the throats of the rich ought not to be cut, nor their magazines plundered; because in their persons they are trustees for those who labour, and their hoards are the banking-houses of these latter. Whether they mean it or not, they do in effect execute their trust—some with more, some with less fidelity and judgment. But on the whole, the duty is performed and every thing returns, deducting some very trifling commission and discount, to the place from whence it arose. When the poor rise to destroy the rich, they act as wisely for their own purposes as when they burn mills and throw corn into the river, to make cheap bread."

Adverting to the impolicy of stopping the distillery, from an idea of its affecting the price of corn, when in reality it was damaged corn unfit for bread, and the very lowest quality of barley and malt that were used for the purpose, he considers the spirit as "clear gain to the nation," and its loss as a serious deduc-

tion from the articles of revenue and trade. The half-jocular apology for its use exhibits the same just appreciation of the habits and wants of mankind in opposition to the inconsiderate condemnation of common-place moralists and philosophers—

“As to what is said in a physical and moral view against the home consumption of spirits, experience has long since taught me very little to respect the declamations on that subject—Whether the thunder of the laws, or the thunder of eloquence ‘be hurled on gin,’ always I am thunder-proof. The alembic, in my mind, has furnished the world a far greater benefit and blessing, than if the *opus maximum* had been really found by chemistry, and like *Midas*, we could turn every thing into gold.”

Having attended to him on this topic as an economist and moralist, let us hear him conclude it as a *physician*; there are few perhaps who will not coincide in opinions so well sustained by facts.

“Undoubtedly there may be a dangerous abuse in the excess of spirits; and at one time I am ready to believe the abuse was great. When spirits are cheap, the business of drunkenness is achieved with little time or labour, but that evil I consider to be nearly done away. Observation for the last forty years, and very particularly for the last thirty, has furnished me with ten instances of drunkenness from other causes, for one from this. Ardent spirit is a great medicine, often to remove distempers—much more frequently to prevent them, or to chase them away in their beginnings. It is not nutritive *in any great degree*. But if not food, it greatly alleviates the want of it. It invigorates the stomach for the digestion of poor meagre diet not easily alliable to the human constitution. Wine the poor cannot touch; beer, as applied to many occasions (as among seamen and fishermen, for instance) will by no means do the business. Let me add, what wits inspired with champagne and claret will turn into ridicule—it is medicine for the mind. Under the pressure of the cares and sorrows of our mortal condition, men have at all times and in all countries, called in some physical aid to their moral consolation—wine, beer, opium, brandy, or tobacco.”

Few things it has been often remarked, escaped the comprehensive range of his observation; nothing indeed which more particularly concerned the well-being, the necessities, the business, or the desires of men generally, or those more immediately around him. His knowledge of farming, and of stock live and dead, was so highly estimated by his neighbours as to occasion frequent applications for advice upon such matters. He surprised a distinguished literary and political character who about this time paid him a visit, by entering into a history of rural affairs, of the rents, taxes, the variations in the poor's rates of fifty parishes in the county, during several consecutive years, and the improvements adopted by the neighbourhood in tillage and grazing, with the



fulness of a farmer who had little else to attend to, though it might be supposed that the meditation and contention attendant on a most active public life, had left little time for acquiring and retaining such details.

The "Thoughts on Scarcity" he had at one time determined to enlarge by the introduction of much more of the same kind of facts, furnished from his own observation, and to re-model and publish them under the title of "Letters on Rural Economics, addressed to Mr. Arthur Young." The work was even advertized, but the more urgent claims of politics probably caused it to be at first deferred and finally relinquished. Few could have given to such a subject a more popular form, or perhaps more real knowledge, as his letters to his cousin Mr. Garret Nagle, which relate chiefly to rural matters, display. In the beginning of this very summer also he had, from the appearance of the young wheat, predicted an insufficient harvest; but finding little credence given to his prognostics in the country, he carried a large quantity of young wheat ears in his carriage to exhibit to his agricultural friends in town, who proved nearly as incredulous, until the result fully evinced his penetration. Harvest-home was always celebrated at Butler's Court with abundant hospitality, the family mingling in the gaiety and sports of the time without reserve, and vying in attention to their humble guests.

On the question of the circulating medium as an important branch of political economy, he seems early to have entertained opinions, which are now considered the most sound and stable. In a recent debate (Feb. 13, 1826) on Country Banks, and the general pecuniary distress experienced throughout the country, they were thus adverted to by the Right Hon. G. Canning:

"There was no period of our history at which there was greater distress or greater difficulty and dismay than in 1793. At that period there was published by Mr. Burke, a gentleman of no ordinary or doubtful authority, a book, every point and sentence of which was questioned at the time, but the truth of which was subsequently most fully established. Mr. Burke, in describing the French revolutionary proceedings, pointed out the mistakes into which they fell with respect to our paper currency, and observed that they seemed to imagine 'that the prosperity of Great Britain grew out of her paper currency, whereas, in point of fact, the paper currency grew out of her prosperity.'"

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"It had been his (Mr. Canning's) fortune to hear and to know Mr. Burke—a man, whose eloquence and whose soundness of opinions distinguished him as a member of that House. Unfortunately, however, he had only known him but two years before his death; he received a letter from him when confined at Bath to a sick bed, from which he never arose, on the subject of the stoppage of cash payments by the Bank, in which the concluding

sentence was to the following effect:—‘Tell Pitt, that if he circulates one pound notes at the same time with guineas, he will never see the guineas again.’ This was the observation of that great man, who, in giving utterance to this sentiment, seemed to exercise a spirit of prophecy, which had so very recently been verified.”

Several plans for bettering the condition of the poor in the neighbourhood originated at his suggestion. Among these, as likely to promote a spirit of honest independence which formed a kind of pledge for the existence of other good qualities, he recommended institutions for mutual support in cases of age and infirmity, in the nature of benefit societies, which were then, and are still, much less common among the rural population than in towns. Of one of these he became a patron and member, subscribed to it as a poor man would do, attended its meetings, visited those who claimed relief, and usually took the opportunity of inculcating sentiments of piety, loyalty, order, and industry among its members. Seventy of the brethren of this society clad in mourning attended him to the grave.

“In 1795 and 1796,” writes a gentleman of the neighbourhood to the author of this work, “corn became much increased in price, and the poor felt the pressure severely. Mr. Burke, who was ever feelingly alive to their wants, and never backward in exerting himself to afford relief, had a windmill in the park at Butler’s Court, in which he directed good corn to be ground, made it into bread at his own house, and retailed it to the poor at a very reduced price. This he said was a better plan than merely to make them a present of it. The bread was of course unadulterated and excellent. He had it served at his own table. I partook of it there; and he requested me to take a loaf to Wycombe in order to show to the more opulent people in that town and in the vicinity, how much might be done, and with comparatively little trouble, for the benefit of the community.”

With the poor in his neighbourhood he was generally a favourite, having the address to converse much with them, visit their cottages, overlook or regulate their pastimes as well as their labours, without losing any thing of his dignity. Strolling out at a very late period of his life during the breakfast hour of his people, he found in a corner of one of the fields a lad, the son of one of his superintending men named Rolfe, at his morning’s repast, composed of a kind of hodge-podge very common in the county. Mr. Burke tasted and commended it; the boy with some pride of heart replied, that it was not so good as he usually had, but if he would come and taste it at dinner, and see how well his mother made it when “father was there,” he would say it was much better. “Well then, my boy, go home and tell your mother that I mean to dine with *you* to day off this favourite dish, at the usual hour.” The boy executed his errand,

to the no small surprise of his mother, who however, not doubting the correctness of the message, exerted her very best housewifery upon the occasion; and accordingly "the Master" made his appearance at the appointed time, partook heartily of their humble fare, and expressed himself highly gratified with his *visit*.

He was frequently accustomed upon public occasions, and upon the occurrence of any event gratifying to his private feelings, to treat his labourers and people about him with a cask of strong beer, his directions about which were, when the news was particularly joyous, *to tap it at both ends*. Some time before the death of his son, intelligence was brought to the house, and communicated to the father in a hasty manner, that he had met with a serious accident which endangered his life. The distress which this occasioned may be conceived, until a friend arrived soon afterwards with the pleasing information that he had sustained no bodily harm. "Call up Webster," cried out Mr. Burke in a moment, "tell him to get all the assistance he can to turn the largest moveable cask of strong beer out of the cellar—bring hither the people to partake of it—and be sure to tap it at both ends with the largest gimlet in the house."

It may be doubted whether his antipathy to revolutionary France at this moment did not extend in part to its produce, as the following anecdote, communicated by a gentleman who occasionally visited him, would almost seem to testify.—"Calling at Butler's Court one day in the year 1795, after passing through a drenching shower of rain, Mr. Burke pressed me to take a glass of strong sherry, which he said was of his own importation, and the very best he could procure. 'I cannot,' he added, 'offer you brandy, for I will never pay a guinea per gallon for that or for any other article from that country.' What would he have said had he lived to see brandy forty-eight shillings per gallon?"

"I cannot conceive," writes the same gentleman, "why Mr. Burke should have been suspected of being a Roman Catholic, when there was nothing whatever to countenance such an assertion, except his having some relations of that persuasion, which is a common thing in Ireland, arising from intermarriages; and his advocating their cause in Parliament, and in the press. This stupid prejudice was not, however, confined to the lower class of people, for I once heard a person holding a considerable office under government term him 'a kiln-dried Roman Catholic.' Shortly after this, it so happened that I was invited to dine at Butler's Court. 'You will meet,' said Mr. Burke to me, 'the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon of the Roman Catholic church, and Dr. Walker King, a dignified clergyman of our *more fortunate and purer church*.' The latter part of the sentence was pronounced emphatically, in allusion perhaps to the then unhappy state of the French church and clergy, and the words made a



strong impression upon me, as contradicting so strongly the ungenerous imputation I had lately heard.

“At table accordingly, I met with the reverend persons he had mentioned, along with several others of the right honourable gentleman’s friends. I shall never forget the manner in which he descended the grand flight of stone steps to receive me—the cordial pressure of his hand—and the graceful and dignified demeanour of introducing me to his other guests.

“Burke had a way of doing these little things which struck me as being peculiarly his own, and calculated to make a strong impression on the mind of a stranger. He was particularly attentive in his own house, or at his own table, to any man who was of inferior rank; he would frequently address his conversation to such person in order to overcome any diffidence he might feel, and, as the phrase is, *draw him out* to exhibit any peculiar merit or talent he possessed. His own conversation, in his gayer moments, was various and excursive; he did not dwell long on common matters, but giving you some bright and brilliant thoughts or happy phrases which it seemed difficult to forget, would pass on to some kindred or relative topic, and throw out the coruscations of his wit or imagination upon that also, thus keeping up a kind of intellectual sharp-shooting on every subject that offered.

“It will be supposed there was some effort in this, and it is not improbable; but it was not obvious. His mind, however, seemed to be mostly on the stretch, and few things escaped it. I think it was impossible ever to mistake him for an every-day man; for if in his efforts to sustain his reputation for superiority in private society, he sometimes failed in his hits, and stumbled into, or below, mediocrity, he recovered in a moment his dignity and proper station.”

In October, 1795, a grant, though somewhat tardy in its appearance, was at length awarded to his eminent public services in a pension of £1200 per annum on the civil list, and afterwards another of £2500 on the four and a half per cent. fund; neither of them solicited directly or indirectly, but said to have originated in the express wish of the King. The manner in which this bounty came, formed however no object of consideration with the political party to whom he was opposed; the simple fact of receiving it being deemed sufficient to justify pretty strong censures in Parliament, and from the less respectable portion of it out of doors connected with the press, the most rancorous abuse, and the most unjust and ungenerous imputations, which among the same class of persons are occasionally current to the present day.

It was in vain to urge that it was deserved by lengthened and very remarkable public services—by his personal disinterestedness on many occasions—by surrendering about £20,000 per

annum, as his perquisites from the Pay Office—by his Reform bill, which for twelve years past had saved the country nearly £80,000 annually in hard money, as well as the extinction of a source of what might have been converted to undue influence in Parliament—by the reformation of the Pay Office in guarding against the serious deficits so frequently experienced there, and rendering available to the public service about £1,000,000, the frequent amount of the balance in hand—and if for nothing else, by his exertions against the revolutionary opinions of the day; which in the general belief warded off the most imminent peril with which the constitution of the country had been threatened since the time of James II. These latter labours, however, so different are political tastes, seemed to constitute his sole offence in the eyes of his former coadjutors and admirers; they had no other charge indeed to allege against him: and the acceptance of the pension was considered as the consummation of the crime. The heat of the moment caused them to forget that a pension is the usual and most open and honourable mode of rewarding great abilities devoted to the advancement of the public good; that if receiving it were a proof of corruption, few of their own friends at that moment but were equally corrupt; and that in fact, tried by this standard of purity, there was scarcely a single honest public name, not excepting Lord Chatham himself, to be found in our annals. Against those effusions of irritation rather than of good sense, good feeling, or sound argument, Mr. Burke had to place a public life of thirty years of unsullied purity, which, in the language of an eminent Whig when alluding to the fact, “was proof against his own embarrassed circumstances.”

The effects of clamour and abuse, whether right or wrong, when perseveringly continued, are rarely inconsiderable. Some even of his admirers began to doubt the propriety of his accepting the boon, among whom was the anonymous author of the “Pursuits of Literature,” who, though convinced, as he said, that no man ever better, or possibly so well, deserved public reward, seems inclined to think he ought not to have received it, in order to avoid the possibility of imputation upon his motives. This is a refinement of fastidiousness not to be looked for, scarcely to be desired, in the affairs of the world, and which, if attended to, would preclude most public servants from experiencing any thing like public gratitude. If a statesman has honourably earned reward, if it be honourably offered to his acceptance, and if he be, from the nature of his private circumstances, really in want of it, why, it may be asked, should the benefit not be received? Would it not indicate weakness rather than strength of mind to be frightened from it by vulgar abuse, or by waiting to obtain that which never was, and never can be received by any man—universal assent to his deserts? Or is it meant to be maintained, that the insignificant in talents, the worthless and inefficient members



of the state, or those who are already rich and do not want it, are alone to profit by the public bounty? "The word pension," said Lord Macartney, a statesman of experience and of unspotted integrity even in India, when India was a hot bed of temptation even to sturdy virtue, "gives great offence to some gentlemen; but for my part I have lived too much in the world to suffer myself to be imposed upon by a word or a name. In every other country of Europe, a pension is considered the most honourable recompence which a subject can enjoy—I speak of free countries, such for instance as Sweden.\* \* \* A pension is infinitely more honourable than a sinecure office; the one loudly speaks its meaning, but the other hypocritically lurks under a supposition of duty where there is nothing to do." His Lordship might have added, that though it is the fashion in England to rail against pensions whether well or ill bestowed, most men, when they have the opportunity, find it very convenient to accept them.

The hostility to Mr. Burke on this occasion was carried into the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale, though answered by an animated defence from Lord Grenville there, and from Mr. Windham in the House of Commons. Some surprise was expressed that men of such consideration in the country, making every allowance for party feelings, should display so much illiberality toward the defender, perhaps the saviour of that very rank and property which served to elevate them above the mass of mankind, and from an atom of which, notwithstanding the countenance given by them to the new opinions, they would have been extremely loth to part. It seemed ungenerous that this should be done by former associates in political life, by men who had acquiesced in grants to other, though much less distinguished, public men for public services, and who from their position in the state, might be supposed to rate at its proper value a long and laborious career, and to estimate those still more intense, though unseen and unrewarded labours, which form the toilsome preparative to public eminence.

The attack, however, had the effect of drawing forth the celebrated "Letter to a Noble Lord;" on the whole the most brilliant exhibition of powers perhaps in the whole range of English prose; which on first meeting with, the present writer read over twice (many parts half a dozen times) without intermission, and with no ordinary wonder at the mingled powers of sarcasm, of irony, of indignant remonstrance, of pointed rebuke, and of imagery, in those few but bold and extraordinary figures, which not merely impress the mind of the reader at the moment by their force, but are seldom afterwards forgotten. The striking passages which it contains are nearly as numerous as the sentences—the whole forming a collection of what may be termed the flashes of indignant genius, roused by a sense of injury and aggression to throw out its consuming fires with no common force on the heads



of the aggressors ;—" I perceive in it," says the author of ' The Pursuits of Literature,' " genius, ability, dignity, imagination, and sights more than youthful poets when they dreamed, and sometimes, the philosophy of Plato and the wit of Lucian."

The pathetic lamentation for the loss of his son, and the glowing tribute to the memory of his old friend,—in whose heart, he says, he had a place till the last beat,—Lord Keppel, uncle to the Duke of Bedford, show a different, though not less striking style of powers. It has been objected, that the introduction of these topics, as they have little to do with the main question, is irrelevant. This criticism, even were it just, is trifling: but in fact these allusions evince much rhetorical skill, by tending to throw odium on the illiberal and ungenerous spirit shown in attacking a retired public servant, old, infirm and desponding, from the loss of that son who would have stood forth his defender; and of the ingratitude of at least one of his assailants towards the bosom friend and counsellor of his uncle, and the defender of his honour, as he expressly tells us, " in his rudest trials."

The jealousies with which he had to encounter during the whole of his public career, and to which allusion has been made in this work, are very truly and forcibly adverted to in the following passage:—

" I possessed not one of the qualities, nor cultivated one of the arts that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts by imposing on the understandings of the people. At every step in my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed), and at every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home. Otherwise no rank, no toleration even for me. I had no arts but manly arts. On them I have stood, and, please God, in spite of the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale, to the last gasp will I stand."

At the Duke, who has long passed to the common receptacle of Whig and Tory, of Commoner and Peer, he particularly points his reprehension. His Grace's little experience in public business, his partiality to the party whose tenets were supposed to sap or to threaten the foundations of all rank and property, the enormous grants of the crown to *his* family in former days, and his youth, were openings to an effective assault from any writer, but to an intellectual gladiator like Mr. Burke, offered overpowering advantages. To contend with such a man, who possessed every weapon of argument at command, always was a service of some danger, for the ablest opponents never escaped from him without bearing traces of some grievous infliction; like the electrical fish, if you

touched him in hostility he shook you to your centre. "I decline," said the indignant veteran, "his Grace's jurisdiction as a judge. I challenge the Duke of Bedford as a juror to pass upon the value of my services. I cannot recognize in his few and idle years, the competence to judge of my long and laborious life."

Not content with overthrowing the politician, he aims a more deadly blow at his possessions in alluding to the mode by which they were said to be acquired; one of the figures used is equally singular and powerful, rising as it does to a high strain of eloquence, and furnishing one of the most forcible examples in rhetoric of the *argumentum ad hominem*.—"The grants to the house of Russel (by Henry VIII.) were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst 'he lies floating many a rood,' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray—every thing of him, and about him, is from the crown. Is it for him to question the dispensation of the royal favour?"

The express purpose of the pamphlet being to justify the bounty of the crown towards himself, it became necessary to advert to his claims and services, which he does by running a parallel between them and those of the Duke's ancestor, who had profited so largely by the same bounty. If the retrospect be deemed harsh or invidious, it must likewise be admitted there was no inconsiderable provocation.—

"I have supported with very great zeal, and I am told with some degree of success, those opinions, or if his Grace likes another expression better, those old prejudices which buoy up the ponderous mass of his nobility, wealth, and titles. I have omitted no exertion to prevent him and them from sinking to that level, to which the meretricious French faction his Grace at least coquets with, omit no exertion to reduce both. I have done all I could to discountenance their inquiries into the fortunes of those who hold large portions of wealth without any apparent merit of their own. I have strained every nerve to keep the Duke of Bedford in that situation which alone makes him my superior."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Why will his Grace, by attacking me, force me reluctantly to compare my little merit with that which obtained from the crown those prodigies of profuse donations by which he tramples on the mediocrity of humble and laborious individuals?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"The first peer of the name, the first purchaser of the grants,

was a Mr. Russel, a person of an ancient gentleman's family raised by being a minion of Henry the Eighth. As there generally is some resemblance of character to create these relations, the favourite was in all likelihood much such another as his master. The first of those immoderate grants was not taken from the ancient demesne of the crown, but from the recent confiscation of the ancient nobility of the land. The lion, having sucked the blood of his prey, threw the offal carcase to the jackall in waiting. Having tasted once the food of confiscation, the favourites became fierce and ravenous. This worthy favourite's first grant was from the lay nobility. The second, infinitely improving upon the enormity of the first, was from the plunder of the church. In truth, his Grace is somewhat excusable for his dislike to a grant like mine, not only in its quantity, but in its kind so different from his own.

" Mine was from a mild and benevolent sovereign; his from Henry the Eighth.

" Mine had not its fund in the murder of any innocent person of illustrious rank, or in the pillage of any body of unoffending men. His grants were from the aggregate and consolidated funds of judgments iniquitously legal, and from possessions voluntarily surrendered by the lawful proprietors with the gibbet at their door.

" The merit of the grantee whom he derives from, was that of being a prompt and greedy instrument of a *levelling* tyrant, who oppressed all descriptions of his people, but who fell with particular fury on every thing that was *great and noble*.

" Mine has been, in endeavouring to screen every man, in every class, from oppression, and particularly in defending the high and eminent, who in the bad times of confiscating princes, confiscating chief governors, or confiscating demagogues, are the most exposed to jealousy, avarice, and envy.

" The merit of the original grantee of his Grace's pensions, was in giving his hand to the work, and partaking the spoil with a prince, who plundered a part of the national church of his time and country.

" Mine was in defending the whole of the national church of my own time and my own country, and the whole of the national churches of all countries, from the principles and the examples which lead to ecclesiastical pillage; thence to a contempt of *all* prescriptive titles, thence to the pillage of *all* property, and thence to universal desolation.

" The merit of the origin of his Grace's fortune was in being a favorite and chief adviser to a prince, who left no liberty to their native country.

" My endeavour was to obtain liberty for the municipal country in which I was born, and for all descriptions and denominations in it. Mine was to support with unrelaxing vigilance every



right, every privilege, every franchise, in this my adopted, my dearer, and more comprehensive country; and not only to preserve those rights in this chief seat of empire, but in every nation, in every land, in every climate, language, and religion, in the vast domain that is still under the protection, and the larger that was once under the protection of the British Crown.

“ His founder’s merits were, by arts in which he served his master and made his fortune, to bring poverty, wretchedness, and depopulation on his country.

“ Mine were under a benevolent prince, in promoting the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture of his kingdom; in which his Majesty shows an eminent example, who even in his amusements is a patriot, and in hours of leisure an improver of his native soil.

“ His founder’s merit, was the merit of a gentleman raised by the arts of a Court, and the protection of a Wolsey, to the eminence of a great and potent lord. His merit in that eminence was by instigating a tyrant to injustice, to provoke a people to rebellion.

“ My merit was, to awaken the sober part of the country, that they might put themselves on their guard against one potent lord, or any greater number of potent lords, or any combination of great leading men of any sort, if even they should attempt to proceed in the same courses, but in the reverse order, that is, by instigating a corrupted populace to rebellion, and through that rebellion, introducing a tyranny yet worse than the tyranny which his Grace’s ancestor supported, and of which he profited in the manner we behold in the despotism of Henry the Eighth.

“ The political merit of the first pensioner of his Grace’s house, was that of being concerned as a counsellor of state in advising, and in his person executing the conditions of a dishonourable peace with France; the surrendering the fortress of Boulogne, then our out-guard on the Continent. By that surrender, Calais, the key of France, and the bridle in the mouth of that power, was, not many years afterwards, finally lost.

“ My merit has been in resisting the power and pride of France, under any form of its rule; but in opposing it with the greatest zeal and earnestness, when that rule appeared in the worst form it could assume; the worst indeed which the prime cause and principle of all evil could possibly give it. It was my endeavour by every means to excite a spirit in the house, where I had the honour of a seat, for carrying on with early vigour and decision, the most clearly just and necessary war, that this or any nation ever carried on; in order to save my country from the iron yoke of its power, and from the more dreadful contagion of its principles; to preserve, while they can be preserved, pure and untainted, the ancient, inbred integrity, piety, good nature, and good humour of the people of England from the dreadful pesti-

lence which, beginning in France, threatens to lay waste the whole moral, and in a great degree the whole physical world, having done both in the focus of its most intense malignity.

“The labour of his Grace’s founder, merited the curses, not loud but deep, of the Commons of England, on whom *he* and his master had effected a *complete Parliamentary Reform*, by making them, in their slavery and humiliation, the true and adequate representatives of a debased, degraded, and undone people.

“My merits were, *in having had an active, though not always an ostentatious share, in every one act, without exception, of undisputed constitutional utility in my time*, and in having supported on all occasions, the authority, the efficiency, and the privileges of the Commons of Great Britain. I ended my services by a recorded and fully reasoned assertion on their own journals of their constitutional rights, and a vindication of their constitutional conduct. I laboured in all things to merit their inward approbation, and (along with the assistance of the largest, the greatest, and best of my endeavours), I received their free, unbiassed, public, and solemn thanks.

“Thus stands the account of the comparative merits of the crown grants which compose the Duke of Bedford’s fortune as balanced against mine. In the name of common sense, why should the Duke of Bedford think, that none but of the house of Russel are entitled to the favour of the crown? Why should he imagine that no king of England has been capable of judging of merit but King Henry the Eighth?”

The collective character of the mad and mistaken philosophers who accomplished the overthrow of the French monarchy, is drawn with equal force and precision.

“In the French Revolution every thing is new; and from want of preparation to meet so unlooked-for an evil every thing is dangerous. Never before this time was a set of literary men converted into a gang of robbers and assassins. Never before did a den of bravoes and handitti assume the garb and tone of an academy of philosophers. Let me tell his grace that an union of such characters, monstrous as it seems, is not made for producing despicable enemies. \* \* \*

“I assure his grace that if I state to him the designs of his enemies, in a manner which may appear to him ludicrous or impossible, I tell him nothing that has not exactly happened point by point, but twenty-four miles from our own shores. \* \* \* He is made for them in every part of their double character. As robbers, to them he is noble booty; as speculatists, he is a glorious subject for their experimental philosophy. He affords matter for an extensive analysis in all the branches of their science, geometrical, physical, civil, and political.

“I am better able to enter into the character of this description

of men than the noble Duke can be. I have lived long and variously in the world. Without any considerable pretensions to literature in myself, I have aspired to the love of letters. I have lived for a great many years in habitudes with those who professed them. I can form a tolerable estimate of what is likely to happen from a character chiefly dependant for fame and fortune on knowledge and talent, as well in its morbid and perverted state, as in that which is sound and natural. Naturally, men so formed and finished are the first gifts of Providence to the world. But when they have once thrown off the fear of God, which was in all ages too often the case, and the fear of man, which is now the case, and when in that state they come to understand one another and to act in corps, a more dreadful calamity cannot arise out of hell to scourge mankind. \* \* \* \*

“ These philosophers consider men in their experiments, no more than they do mice in an air pump, or in a recipient of mephitic gas. Whatever his Grace may think of himself, they look upon him, and every thing that belongs to him, with no more regard than they do upon the whiskers of that little long-tailed animal, that has been long the game of the grave, demure, insidious, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed philosophers, whether going upon two legs or upon four.

“ His Grace’s landed possessions are irresistibly inviting to an *agrarian* experiment. They are a downright insult upon the rights of man. They are more extensive than the territory of many of the Grecian republics; and they are without comparison more fertile than most of them. There are now republics in Italy, in Germany, and in Switzerland, which do not possess any thing like so fair and ample a domain. There is a scope for seven philosophers to proceed in their analytical experiments, upon Harrington’s seven different forms of republics, in the acres of this one Duke.

“ Hitherto they have been wholly unproductive to speculation; fitted for nothing but to fatten bullocks, and to produce grain for beer, still more to stupify the dull English understanding. Abbé Sieyes however has whole nests of pigeon-holes full of constitutions, ready made, ticketed, sorted, and numbered; suited to every season and every fancy; some with the top of the pattern at the bottom, and some with the bottom at the top; some plain, some flowered; some distinguished for their simplicity; others for their complexity; some of blood colour; some of *boue de Paris*; some with directories, others without a direction; some with councils of elders and councils of youngsters; some without any council at all. Some where the electors choose the representatives; others where the representatives choose the electors. Some in long coats and some in short cloaks; some with pantaloons; some without breeches. Some with five shilling qualifications; some totally unqualified. So that no constitution-fancier may go



unsuited from his shop, provided he loves a pattern of pillage, oppression, arbitrary imprisonment, confiscation, exile, revolutionary judgment, and legalized premeditated murder, in any shapes into which they can be put. What a pity it is that the progress of experimental philosophy should be checked by his Grace's monopoly! \* \* \*

“Is it not a singular phenomenon, that whilst the sans-culottes carcase butchers, and the philosophers of the shambles, are pricking their dotted lines upon his (the Duke's) hide, and like the print of the poor ox that we see at the shop windows at Charing Cross, alive as he is, and thinking no harm in the world, he is divided into rumps, and sirloins, and briskets, and into all sorts of pieces for roasting, boiling, and stewing—that all the time they are measuring *him*, his Grace is measuring *me*; is invidiously comparing the bounty of the crown with the deserts of the defender of his order, and in the same moment fawning on those who have the knife half out of the sheath—poor innocent,

“Pleas'd to the last he crops the flowery food,  
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.”

Report asserts that the account given in this work of the origin of the Russel possessions is erroneous, though it has been said that the information was supplied from the library of his late Majesty George III. at Buckingham House; be this as it may, no formal contradiction of the statement was made, and Mr. Burke is not likely to have risked mere conjecture where confutation was so easy. It was on his part rather a violent, but not an unfair retaliation; for against an invading and wanton enemy all arms may be used, and he must be a poor soldier who chooses the weaker in preference to the stronger weapon. The regret perhaps is, that he wielded his advantage rather imprudently than unjustly, by furnishing hints to the Agrarians or Jacobins of a future day, who may be inclined to make experiments in parcelling out those extensive and flourishing domains which he calls the “low, fat, Bedford level.”

His other assailant on this occasion, the Earl of Lauderdale, still, to the delight of his friends, adorns that house of which he has long been so distinguished a member. Doubtless he has regretted the momentary injustice done to an old acquaintance and political leader with the same sincerity\* as he is also said to have read his recantation from the then prevailing partialities toward the French system of freedom of 1793, and to that other

\* From many complimentary effusions of his Lordship to Mr. Burke, the following handsome one, applied to his Reform Bill in 1781, is selected—“He (Mr. Burke) was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan of reform; not a mean, narrow, wretched scheme of retrenchment, breaking in upon the dignity of the crown, and the honour of the nation, but a great and beautiful arrangement of office, calculated not to degrade a government, but to exalt and to adorn it.”

stock subject for patriotic oratory, Parliamentary Reform. While so many able men, however, were thus misled upon such subjects, it must impress us still more with a conviction of the sagacity of their great opponent, who distinguished at a glance what it cost others so much teaching and lecturing, and mental hammering and annealing, to learn, in the school of political mistake and failure.

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## CHAPTER XV.

Establishment of the Emigrant School at Penn.—Letters to W. H——, and to J. Gahagan, Esq.—Letters on a Regicide Peace.—His prophetic Spirit as opposed to that of Mr. Pitt.—Report concerning him.—Letter to Mrs. Leadbeater.—Letter on the Affairs of Ireland.—His Illness and Death.

IT should have been mentioned in a previous page, that in the year 1794, Mr. Burke, commiserating the destitute condition of many of the emigrant children whose fathers had perished either by the guillotine or the sword in the general convulsion of their country, and of others whose means were inadequate to the purposes of education, applied to government for assistance in order to form an establishment adapted to supply this want, which he volunteered to superintend. This request was very liberally complied with. The house appropriated for the purpose had been the residence of his old friend General Haviland, which Mr. Burke, in the year 1793, induced government to lease from the person to whom it had been sold by the devisees of the General, in order to fit it up for the reception of several of the unhappy French clergy who, houseless and penniless, were scattered through the country, subsisting on charity. From some unexpected difficulties which occurred, this humane design at the moment did not take effect. The house however continued in possession of the head of the barrack establishment, General de Lancey, in trust for his Majesty, by whom it was now given up, by order of the Lords of the Treasury, to the Duke of Portland, the Marquis of Buckingham, the Lord Chancellor, Mr. Windham, Mr. Burke, Dr. Walker King, and others, as trustees for the management of the school, and it was opened immediately afterwards. The Abbé Maraine presided over this establishment, and had for his coadjutor the learned and amiable Abbé Chevallier.

An antiquarian correspondent, who was connected with this institution as treasurer, after the death of the original founder, having kindly communicated to the author some memoranda con-

cerning it, they cannot perhaps be better given than in his own words.

“Penn, in Buckinghamshire, a bold promontory, to which Mr. Burke frequently resorted, at one time as the friend of General Haviland, and latterly as the patron of the emigrant school there, is situated about three miles north-west of Beaconsfield. Many of the residents are distinguished for patriarchal longevity, not a few of them attaining a century of years. The family of Grove trace an uninterrupted descent from the conquest as proprietors of the same estate. The last possessor, Mr. Edmund Grove, died in June 1823, at the advanced age of ninety-four; and being well known in this part of the country as a fair representative of the ancient English yeoman, may be worth noticing. When young, he had been the play-fellow of the late Viscount Curzon, and of John Baker Holroyd, who died Earl of Sheffield, and was known to most of the surrounding nobility and gentry by the name of Yeoman Grove—a name now disused for the more assuming appellation of Esquire, but formerly applied to those who farmed their own estates. Yeoman Grove was likewise known to his late Majesty George III., who permitted him an unusual freedom. Whenever they met in the street at Windsor, which was not unfrequent on market-day, he would grasp the royal hand with fervour, and in a way peculiarly his own, inquire—‘How does your Majesty do?—How is the Queen?—How are all the children?’ which commonly occasioned the Royal Personage a hearty good-humoured laugh.

“Tyler’s Green House, the residence of General Haviland, was formerly the property and residence of the Bakers, ancestors of the Earl of Sheffield, of Sheffield Place, county of Sussex. It is now no more; ‘nought could relieve the tottering mansion from its fall.’ In 1822 it was sold by auction in lots, of course pulled down and carried away, so that scarcely a vestige now remains to mark the spot where senators were wont to converse, and wit, whim, and eloquence to flow in no ordinary current amid the social circle formed by the Burkes. Previous to the demolition, I had a correct drawing made of the front, which I have placed among my illustrations of the county of Bucks.

“To those who are acquainted with the country, the guides to the site of the mansion are two of the largest and most lofty fir-trees in the kingdom. The General was accustomed to call them his two grenadiers; one was more lofty than the other, an unlucky monkey kept by Mrs. Haviland having ascended to the summit of the other, and cropped the leading branch. These trees may be distinctly seen from the terrace at Windsor—from Harrow-on-the-Hill—from St. Paul’s Church—and from the rising ground near Reading: in the woody neighbourhood of Penn they occasionally serve as a guide to bewildered pedestrians. I saved them from the levelling axe in 1798, by my representation of their utility, and I am assured that the present noble proprietor,



Richard Earl Howe, will not suffer so grand a feature on his extensive domains in Buckinghamshire to be destroyed.

“However incredible it may appear, it is vouched for as a fact by persons of respectability in the neighbourhood, that the cannonading at the reduction of Valenciennes in 1793 was distinctly heard by the inhabitants of Penn. This no doubt will be laughed at by many as utterly beyond belief, but there are many authentic instances on record of the distance to which sound occasionally travels, depending no doubt on a peculiar state of the atmosphere at the time: it is understood, beyond question, that the cannonading on that occasion was heard at Dover. During the late war, the firing of cannon when ships were engaged at sea during the night has likewise been distinguished at Penn; the time has been frequently noted, and the fact shortly afterward ascertained from the public papers.

“In April, 1796,\* the emigrant school was opened, and Mr. Burke, for the remainder of his life, watched over it with the solicitude, not merely of a friend, but of a father. His smiles might be said to have gladdened the hearts of the exiles; I have witnessed many interesting scenes there of that nature; they were doomed, alas, too soon to lose their kind protector. At the annual distribution of prizes, the senior scholar delivered a Latin oration in the presence of a large assembly of nobility and gentry in the great hall, in which Mr. Burke was always alluded to as their parent and friend.

“Mr. Burke assigned to these youths a blue uniform, wearing in their hats a white cockade inscribed ‘Vive le Roi;’ those who had lost their fathers had it placed on a bloody label, those who had lost uncles, on a black one. The Marquis of Buckingham made them a present of a small brass cannon, and a pair of colours, which were displayed on public days, and seemed a source of no little pride and gratification to those future defenders of loyalty.

“After the death of Mr. Burke I was appointed treasurer, and received from the Lords of the Treasury fifty pounds per month for the support of the establishment. Upon the restoration of legitimate monarchy in France in 1814, the money was remitted to me thence, until the dissolution of the institution on the 1st of August, 1820, when, on the departure of the superior and the pupils, the colours were presented to me as a token of remembrance, and I retain them with much satisfaction, from the interesting associations they recall to mind.

“Many of the youths educated in this college so humanely

\* This must be an error of my correspondent. The school at least existed previous to this time, but may have been removed at the time stated to the house in question, as in another communication he says he delivered up possession, on the part of government, to Mr. Burke, March 30, 1796.

founded through the influence and under the auspices of Mr. Burke, at present occupy important stations in various parts of the dominions of the King of France, and for their success in life they ought ever to regard with sentiments of gratitude and veneration the memory of that great and good man."

The superintendence of this school became a source of occupation and amusement, calculated to divert an occasional gloom that darkened his mind, and as a relaxation from the weight of heavier labours. The interest which he took in its success and continuance may be judged by the earnest manner in which he bequeaths it in his will to the protection and favour of the noble persons joined with him in the trust, while the wish is expressed that it may be placed under the immediate care of Dr. Walker King and Dr. Lawrence; conceiving perhaps that, as being his personal friends, and from their greater acquaintance with such matters, those gentlemen would take more interest than strangers could be supposed to do, in giving stability to an institution to which he had given existence.

Instances of his personal kindness and attention towards the members of the establishment and their friends, were shown in a variety of little ways, more particularly in presents from his larder of any delicacy which it did not so much lie in their way to procure. This very often occasioned an amusing scene to the friends of the family, between him and his housekeeper, Mrs. Webster. She, it seems, had more regard for the credit of her master's table than for the appetites of the emigrants, and whenever there was any thing nice in the larder, such as a haunch of venison, or game intended for the second course, she was obliged to keep watch over the dainty, lest it should be silyly despatched off to the "French people" by her improvident master, and her skill and management in conducting the repast be thus called in question by his visitors. Sometimes, however, he contrived to elude her vigilance, and sometimes he was caught and disappointed. In attempting one day to send off a present of venison intended to be dressed for company, the wary housekeeper, who was upon the alert, darted upon him as upon a thief caught in the fact—"Sir, Sir," she cried out, fastening upon the article in question, "I cannot part with my haunch—I cannot indeed—I shall be ruined if I lose my haunch—we shall have nothing else fit to dress for dinner." "But, my dear Mrs. Webster, pray consider these poor people—" "I can consider nothing, Sir, but that we shall have no second course—give it away to French people indeed!" "But these poor people have been accustomed to such things in their own country, and for one day I think we can do without them." "Bless me, Sir, remember there are Lord and Lady —— and Mr. and Mrs. —— coming to dinner, and without something of this kind I shall get into shock-

ing disgrace—No, no, Sir, I cannot part with my haunch ;” and adhering rigidly to this determination, her master was at length obliged to retreat, foiled in his object.

The Abbé Maraine, the superior of the school, who was a good natured man, and had little idea of English school discipline, was complaining one day of the indocility of some of his pupils, when Mr. Burke told him he must exert his cane with more vigour, and if that would not do, he must flog—and flog soundly. The Abbé appeared somewhat shocked at the idea of this punishment. “Do not fear its success,” replied Mr. Burke “it is our chief receipt in England for turning out eminent men—it seldom fails—good scholars, nay, good poets are made by the rod—and why not good soldiers?” The superior ultimately adopted the recipe, and after a time confessed (in his own words) “that he believed Monsieur Burke was as right in that point as he had been in so many others.”

His little personal communication with most of the Ministry about this period, appears evident from the following letter written to William H——, Esq., afterwards of Hanwell Park, Middlesex, who had applied for his interest in the India House, a place where, above all others, it was least likely, for obvious reasons, to have effect.

“My dear Sir,

“You have always had my opinion and good wishes; and your conduct has been such, that I am sure in serving your interest, I should do good service to the public. But why you ‘formed any of your hopes on the support which you may derive from that influence which *I alone* can give to your application’ is to me quite inconceivable. If I did not know your kind partiality towards me, I should think you laughed at me. I to have influence in the India House or the Board of Control! I to have influence to protect any of those whom Hastings is resolved to ruin! Surely you know that I could not name a cadet to go to India. I could not raise or kick down an Indian ant-hill; much less remove the mountains that Hastings heaps on those he means to crush.

“If you imagine that I have any influence with Mr. ——— (what you call the Board of Control is but a name) in *India affairs*, you are mistaken, in spite of the experience you have had of the inutility of my endeavours to prevent ——, and all iniquity in him, from being sent to India. Besides, I seldom see one of the Ministers. Mr. Pitt not for more than a twelve-month. The Duke of Portland not for several months. Mr. Dundas but once on a particular affair as remote as pole from pole from India and its concerns. The Chancellor once or twice only, and I know that in these things he will not interfere. In my opinion, nothing could possibly be more fatal to



you than the smallest use of my name in any matter relating to Bengal.

“The truth is, that Mr. Dundas, I have some reason to believe, has a good will towards me; and would not persecute any person on my account—but I know, and you know too, that your business is involved in *twenty* (or *hourly*, the exact word cannot be made out from the original which now lies before me) difficulties, which those who hate your cause in the direction, could make use of to frustrate your expectations; and I know to a certainty that he would not enter into a conflict with them on my account, nor struggle with those embarrassments which in a case of a warm private friend he would exert himself to surmount.

“The only man in office I habitually see is Mr. Windham; who has been here several times since my calamity. He was here, and just going off, when I received your letter; I had just time to speak to him on the business. I recommended you to him as strongly as I could; but he can do nothing. However, you have his leave to call upon him—and I am sure he will serve you if he can; of which however, as I have told you, I have much doubt. But use the best means you have. You think I can do much with A——, which is more than I think myself—I will write to him with pleasure. I most sincerely wish you all good, and am with great regard and esteem,

“My dear Sir,

“Your most faithful and

“Obedient humble servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“Jan. 24, 1796.”

The following is in a different strain; but it more particularly explains the cause of the seclusion in which he lived, as mentioned in the preceding, which it thus appears was a grief that nothing could overcome. It is addressed to Mr. Gahagan, the father of the present Baroness de Montesquieu.

“My dear Sir,

“You have been very good and charitable in wishing to visit this infirmary, where my wife, my poor old friend Will Burke, and myself, are all lame; Mrs. Burke with the very same lameness which took her some years ago, without effect, to Margate, where we had the pleasure of seeing you. The sight of such a sympathising friend is a comfort to those who are no longer in society. Since my calamity\* I have not dined out of my own house; nor am I fond of receiving any new acquaintance; my business and my pleasure in this life being both of them completely over.

“When I mentioned Mons. de Montesquieu, it was not as a man I wished to see, on account of his own distinguished merit,

\* The death of his son.

or the fame of his family, which the world is so full of, and to whose labours the world owes so much; it is as part of an old friend that I who refuse all new acquaintance took the liberty of desiring him to accompany you. Our house has very little lodging-room, and it is all we could do to lodge you two. Our settled family takes up four beds, and my old friend Dr. Walker King, whom I have not seen for a good while, and whom I am not likely to see for this year again, we expect here, with his wife and child. We have not a bed for a third person; so that I must deny myself for the present (and it is a real self-denial) the society of the worthy and most respectable gentleman you proposed to accompany yourself and your son the Baron.

“Alas! my dear friend, I am not what I was two years ago. Society is too much for my nerves. I sleep ill at night; and am drowsy and sleep much in the day. Every exertion of spirits which I make for the society I cannot refuse, costs me much, and leaves me doubly heavy and dejected after it. Such is the person you come to see; or rather the wreck of what was never a very first-rated vessel. Such as I am, I feel infinitely for the kindness of those old friends who remember me with compassion. As to new, I never see one but such French as come to visit the school, which supplies to me the void in my own family, and it is my only comfort. For the sake of that I still submit to see some who are still more miserable than I am.

“Adieu, my dear Sir, until Monday. Mrs. Burke and my niece salute you cordially.

“Ever yours,  
“EDMUND BURKE.

“June 22, 1796.”

This letter furnishes a striking picture of a great mind reduced by the influence of sorrow to a state of the most painful despondency. Yet it must serve to give us a higher impression of the original and even still untamed vigour of that mind, to find him at this moment detaching it from all these melancholy yet unavoidable contemplations to renewed exertions with his pen now almost pronounced to be irresistible, for the patriotic purpose of dissipating a gathering gloom over the public mind, nearly as heavy as that which overshadowed his own.

The misfortunes of the war, and the triumphant career of the republican arms, unchecked by any reverse on the continent of Europe, had occasioned a momentary revulsion of public feeling, not uncommon in England. From warm anticipations of success, fears still stronger began to be entertained of the final result of the struggle. Several friends of the ministry, if not some of the ministry themselves, were among the victims of these fears; and Lord Auckland's pamphlet, already alluded to, became a kind of ground-work to the superstructure of

apprehensions raised by this timid order of politicians, and by those who had from the first opposed the contest with France. A cry for peace was therefore pretty generally diffused. Mr. Pitt, either really affected by it, or willing to chime in with the humour of the day, acquiesced, by opening negotiations through two or three different channels, with the agents of the Republic, who received our advances as any one acquainted with the revolutionary character must have known and expected, with no little insolence. Indignation, however, was not immediately roused. We sustained a rebuff or two patiently. In this situation, Mr. Burke, feeling for the national dignity, and determined to persuade or to shame it out of its fears, produced towards the end of the summer, in two letters, addressed to a member of the House of Commons, "*Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.*"

This is another of those marvellous productions, which, combining strong and various powers of argumentation, with great eloquence and rhetorical skill, conveyed with little or no meretricious ornament to the understanding, occasioned a host of replies, but scarcely any thing which can be dignified with the name of answer. The best perhaps is in one of the critical journals of the day;\* it is said to have been written by an eminent literary character, now a most distinguished member of the House of Commons. On the question at issue, their opinions were utterly at variance. But as genius can seldom be insensible to genius, however opposite their political speculations, this writer characterises the work of his great opponent in the following terms:—

"Such is the outline of this publication; of which if it be considered merely as a work of literature it might be sufficient to say, that it is scarcely surpassed in excellence by any of the happiest productions of the best days of its author. The same vast reach and comprehension of view—the same unbounded variety of allusion, illustration, and ornament, drawn from every province of nature and of science—the same unrivalled mastery over language—the same versatility of imagination which at will transforms itself from sublime and terrific genius into gay and playful fancy—the same happy power of relieving the harshness of political dispute by beautiful effusions of sentiment, and of dignifying composition by grave and lofty maxims of moral and civil wisdom—the same inexhaustible ingenuity in presenting even common ideas under new and fascinating shapes—the same unlimited sway over the human passions, which fills us at his pleasure with indignation, with horror, or with pity; which equally commands our laughter or our tears; in a word, the same wit, humour, pathos, invention, force, dignity, copiousness, and magnificence, are conspicuous in this production, which will immortalize the

\* Monthly Review.



other writings of Mr. Burke. There is nothing ordinary in his view of a subject. He is perhaps of all writers the one of whom it may be said with the most strict truth, that no idea appears hackneyed in his hands; no topic seems common-place when he treats it. When the subject must (from the very narrowness of human conception which bounds even the genius of Mr. Burke) be borrowed, the turn of thought and the manner of presenting it are his own. The attitude and drapery are peculiar to the master."

It may be noticed that two or three others of his most able yet determined opponents (and the fact is mentioned because hostile testimony on such an occasion will be least suspected of exaggeration) look upon this work as his greatest effort in politics—certainly the greatest on the question of the French Revolution; in the strong, full, yet clear train of argument he pursues, the precision of view and unity of purpose displayed in the plan, and the sobriety with which they are submitted to the serious consideration of the kingdom.

As the Letter to a Noble Lord might in many of its passages be considered a kind of field-day to the light troops of his imagination, sarcasm, and humour, so the "Regicide Peace" may be considered the heavy artillery—the breaching battery of his judgment and reasoning powers. Besides it is a kind of dying legacy to his country. It was the last thing he lived to publish; and it is believed to have had no common effect in re-animating the drooping courage of the nation. "To a people who have been once proud and great, and great because they were proud," he observes in his first page, "a change in the national spirit is the most terrible of all revolutions."

The outset offers a profound remark, which in a few words appears to demolish a favourite popular notion that kingdoms resemble men in having their periods of youth, maturity, and total decay, and is levelled at the fears of those who fancied that England was approaching her last stage—

"I am not quite of the mind of those speculators who seem assured that necessarily, and by the constitution of things, all states have the same periods of infancy, manhood, and decrepitude, that are found in the individuals that compose them. Parallels of this sort rather furnish similitudes to illustrate or to adorn, than supply analogies from whence to reason. The objects which are attempted to be forced into an analogy are not found in the same classes of existence. Individuals are physical beings subject to laws universal and invariable. The immediate cause acting in these laws may be obscure; the general results are subjects of certain calculation. But commonwealths are not physical but moral essences. They are artificial combinations, and in their proximate efficient cause, the arbitrary productions of the human mind. We are not yet acquainted with the laws which necessarily

influence the stability of that kind of work made by that kind of agent.

“There is not in the physical order (with which they do not appear to hold any assignable connexion) a distinct cause by which any of those fabrics must necessarily grow, flourish, or decay; nor in my opinion does the world produce any thing more determinate on that subject, than what may serve as an amusement (liberal indeed, and ingenious, but still only an amusement) for speculative men. I doubt whether the history of mankind is yet complete enough, if ever it can be so, to furnish grounds for a sure theory on the internal causes which necessarily affect the fortune of a state. I am far from denying the operation of such causes: but they are infinitely uncertain and much more obscure, and much more difficult to trace than the foreign causes that tend to raise, to depress, and sometimes to overwhelm a community.”

Touching on this subject in the letter to W. Elliot, Esq. he says—

“I am not of opinion that the race of men and the commonwealths they create, like the bodies of individuals, grow effete, and languid, and bloodless, and ossify by the necessities of their own conformation, and the fatal operation of longevity and time. These analogies between bodies natural and politic, though they may sometimes illustrate arguments, furnish no argument of themselves. They are but too often used under colour of a specious philosophy, to find apologies for the despair of laziness and pusillanimity, and to excuse the want of all manly efforts, when the exigencies of our country call for them more loudly.”

The first letter relates generally to the overtures for peace, in which some incidental and relative matters are discussed. The second enters into an examination of the genius and character of the French Revolution, as it regards other nations, and an opinion is hazarded, supported by some facts, that the aggrandizement of the nation at the expense of part, or the whole of the rest of Europe, in a more direct and violent way than the common policy of states would warrant, formed an inducement with some of her statesmen to countenance the first excesses of the people.

In the first letter he contends, that the regicide faction is not France, and that to treat with it is to recognise robbery and usurpation. To attack our feelings and prejudices on the most vulnerable side, all the art of the rhetorician is called in to the aid of the statesman, by inquiring what we should think were the case our own, as in the following splendid passage:—

“Mere locality does not constitute a body politic. Had Cade and his gang got possession of London, they would not have been the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council. The body politic of France existed in the majesty of its throne; in the dignity of its nobility; in the honour of its gentry; in the sanctity of its clergy; in the reverence of its magistracy; in the weight

and consideration due to its landed property in the several bailiages; in the respect due to its moveable substance represented by the corporations of the kingdom. All these particular *molecule* united, form the great mass of what is truly the body politic in all countries. They are so many deposits and receptacles of justice; because they can only exist by justice. Nation is a moral essence, not a geographical arrangement, or a denomination of the nomenclator. France, though out of her territorial possession, exists; because the sole possible claimant, I mean the proprietary, and the government to which the proprietary adheres, exists and claims. God forbid, that if you were expelled from your house by ruffians and assassins, that I should call the material walls, doors, and windows of ——, the ancient and honourable family of ——; am I to transfer to the intruders, who, not content to turn you out naked to the world, would rob you of your very name, all the esteem and respect I owe to you? The regicides in France are not France. France is out of her bounds, but the kingdom is the same.

“To illustrate my opinions on this subject, let us suppose a case, which, after what has happened, we cannot think absolutely impossible, though the inquiry is to be abominated, and the event deprecated with our most ardent prayers. Let us suppose, then, that our most gracious Sovereign was sacrilegiously murdered; his exemplary queen, at the head of the matronage of this land, murdered in the same manner; that those princesses whose beauty and modest elegance are the ornaments of the country, and who are the leaders and patterns of the ingenuous youth of their sex, were put to a cruel and ignominious death, with hundreds of others, mothers and daughters, ladies of the first distinction; that the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, princes the hope and pride of the nation, with all their brethren, were forced to fly from the knives of assassins; that the whole body of our excellent clergy were either massacred or robbed of all, and transported—the Christian religion, in all its denominations, forbidden and persecuted; the law totally, fundamentally, and in all its parts, destroyed—the judges put to death by revolutionary tribunals—the Peers and Commons robbed to the last acre of their estates—massacred, or in exile and in beggary; that the whole landed property should share the very same fate; that every military and naval officer of honour and rank, almost to a man, should be placed in the same description of confiscation and exile; that the principal merchants and bankers should be drawn out, as from an hen-coop, for slaughter; that the citizens of our greatest and most flourishing cities, when the hand and the machinery of the hangman were not found sufficient, should have been collected in the public squares, and massacred by thousands with cannon; if three hundred thousand others should have been doomed to a situation worse than death in noisome and pestilential prisons.—



In such a case, is it in the faction of robbers I am to look for my country? Would this be the England that you and I, and even strangers, admired, honoured, loved, and cherished? Would not the exiles of England alone be my government and my fellow-citizens? Would not their places of refuge be my temporary country? Would not all my duties and all my affections be there, and there only? Should I consider myself as a traitor to my country, and deserving of death, if I knocked at the door and heart of every potentate in Christendom to succour my friends, and to avenge them on their enemies? Could I, in any way, show myself more a patriot? What should I think of those potentates who insulted their suffering brethren, who treated them as vagrants, or at least as mendicants; and could find no allies, no friends, but in regicide murderers and robbers? What ought I to think and feel, if being geographers instead of kings, they recognised the desolated cities, the wasted fields, and the rivers polluted with blood, of this geometrical measurement, as the honourable member of Europe, called England? In that condition what should we think of Sweden, Denmark, or Holland, or whatever power afforded us churlish and treacherous hospitality, if they should invite us to join the standard of our king, our laws, and our religion, if they should give us a direct promise of protection—if after all this, taking advantage of our deplorable situation, which left us no choice, they were to treat us as the lowest and vilest of all mercenaries? If they were to send us far from the aid of our king, and our suffering country, to squander us away in the most pestilential climates for a venal enlargement of their own territories, for the purpose of trucking them, when obtained, with those very robbers and murderers they had called upon us to oppose with our blood? What would be our sentiments, if in that miserable service we were not to be considered either as English, or as Swedes, Dutch, Danes, but as outcasts of the human race? Whilst we were fighting those battles of their interests, and as their soldiers, how should we feel if we were to be excluded from all their cartels? How must we feel, if the pride and flower of the English nobility and gentry, who might escape the pestilential clime and the devouring sword, should, if taken prisoners, be delivered over as rebel subjects, to be condemned as rebels, as traitors, as the vilest of all criminals, by tribunals formed of Maroon negro slaves, covered over with the blood of their masters, who were made free and organized into judges, for their robberies and murders? What should we feel under this inhuman, insulting, and barbarous protection of Muscovites, Swedes, or Hollanders? Should we not obtest Heaven, and whatever justice there is yet on earth? Oppression makes wise men mad; but the distemper is still the madness of the wise, which is better than the sobriety of fools. The cry is the voice of sacred misery, exalted, not into wild raving, but into the sanctified frenzy of

prophecy and inspiration—in that bitterness of soul, in that indignation of suffering virtue, in that exaltation of despair, would not persecuted English loyalty cry out, with an awful warning voice, and denounce the destruction that waits on monarchs, who consider fidelity to them as the most degrading of all vices, who suffer it to be punished as the most abominable of all crimes; and who have no respect but for rebels, traitors, regicides, and furious negro slaves, whose crimes have broke their chains? Would not this warm language of high indignation have more of sound reason in it, more of real affection, more of true attachment, than all the lullabies of flatterers, who would hush monarchs to sleep in the arms of death? Let them be well convinced, that if ever this example should prevail in its whole extent, it will have its full operation. Whilst kings stand firm on their base, though under that base there is a sure wrought mine, there will not be wanting to their levees a single person of those who are attached to their fortune, and not to their persons or cause: but hereafter none will support a tottering throne. Some will fly for fear of being crushed under the ruin; some will join in making it. They will seek in the destruction of royalty, fame, and power, and wealth, and the homage of kings, with *Reubel*, with *Carnot*, with *Reveliere*, and with the *Merlins*, and the *Talliens*, rather than suffer exile and beggary with the *Condés*, or the *Broglis*, the *Castries*, the *D'Avrais*, the *Serrents*, the *Cazalés*, and the long line of loyal, suffering patriot nobility, or to be butchered with the oracles and the victims of the laws, the *D'Ormesons*, the *D'Espremeniis*, and the *Malesherbes*. This example we shall give, if instead of adhering to our fellows in a cause which is an honour to us all, we abandon the lawful government and lawful corporate body of France, to hunt for a shameful and ruinous fraternity, with this odious usurpation that disgraces civilized society and the human race.

“And is then example nothing? It is every thing. Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other. This war is a war against that example. It is not a war for Louis the Eighteenth, or even for the property, virtue, fidelity of France. It is a war for George the Third, for Francis the Second, and for all the dignity, property, honour, virtue, and religion of England, of Germany, and of all nations.”—

A third letter, treating on the rupture of the negotiations, the terms of peace proposed, and the resources of the country for the continuance of the war, was in progress through the press when death snatched the great writer from the scene of his labours. A fourth letter also, which, it has been already observed, was written but not completed, pursues the subject through its various relations, chiefly in the form of comment on that of Lord Auckland; to the doctrines of which it gives as complete an overthrow in reasoning, as it is possible for any thing of the kind to receive.

In conversation his opinions were quite as decided and not less forcibly expressed. When the negotiations at Lisle, which he thought so derogatory to the country, were going on, and, in the opinions of some, promised peace, he said from the first that such a result was impossible—"that he was only astonished how the people of England, or such a body of men as the English Ministry, could for a moment believe that the republican leaders would grant peace, even were peace desirable, without first requiring the surrender of our national honour. They are doubly foes," he added; "for they would not only injure but insult you." To a gentleman who began to talk to him on the probable success of the negotiation then pending, and consequent termination of the revolution; "The termination of the revolution! to be sure!" exclaimed Mr. Burke. "The revolution over! Why, Sir, it is scarcely begun! As yet you have only heard the first music; you'll see the actors presently; but neither you nor I shall see the close of the drama."

Mr. Fox himself is more than once said to have expressed his astonishment at the singular fulfilment of his predictions; and when a nobleman of some political celebrity, in allusion to the vehemence of Mr. Burke on the question of revolutionary politics, hinted an opinion that he was a splendid madman—"Whether mad or inspired," is reported to have been the answer, "fate seems to have determined that he shall be an uncommon political prophet."

These letters are worthy to be recurred to by those who have passed through the tempestuous and alarming period of which they treat, or to those who, too young at the time for much reflection on public matters, may wish to know what it really was, and to what degree of terror the continued success of the revolutionary arms and principles had given rise. They furnish the best idea, if not of the origin, at least of the deadly nature of the war in which the country was engaged; of the impossibility of concluding peace upon any terms consistent with the national honour and security; and they prove, what perhaps will not now be disputed, that peace at that moment in any way would have been more dangerous to our best interests than the hostility in which we were compelled to persevere. The character which is drawn of what he calls "the Cannibal Republic," in different parts of the letters, is indeed an extraordinary effort, for any thing equal to which in completeness and force the reader will in vain look in any historical detail, ancient or modern. The exposure is as complete as if every individual member of the fearful machine, however minute, was directly under his eye. It is the finished piece of dissection of a wonderful political anatomist, who not merely traces the broad outline, the external figure and features of his *subject*, but whose knife penetrates to the heart, and whose saw bares even the *sensorium* of this great moral monster,



displaying the whole of its secret workings, motives, and principles to the view of the world, the causes of its inflammatory temperament, and morbid yet fearful vigour.

Nothing is more remarkable in these letters than the prophetic truths which they contain. Futurity may almost be said to have been open to his view on the subject they discuss. He wrote under a strong impression that his death was not far distant. "I shall not live to behold," he says in his first page, "the unravelling of the intricate plot which saddens and perplexes the awful drama of Providence now acting on the moral theatre of the world. Whether for thought or for action I am at the end of my career." At the conclusion of the first letter he again adds—"What I say, I *must* say at once. Whatever I write is in its nature testamentary. It may have the weakness, but it has the sincerity of a dying declaration." When peace was eagerly sought, and as eagerly anticipated perhaps because it was sought, he calmly tells the country, "We are not at the end of our struggle, nor near it. Let us not deceive ourselves; we are at the *beginning* of great troubles." Speaking of the lukewarmness of the friends of Ministry against the regicides as a body, we are told, "much less were they made to infuse into our minds that stubborn persevering spirit which alone is capable of bearing up against those vicissitudes of fortune which will probably occur, and those burdens which must be inevitably borne in a long war. I speak it emphatically, and with a desire that it should be marked, *in a long war.*" A little further on, he hints at a period of twenty years or more;—with what surprising accuracy on all these points it is needless to point out.

Alluding in another part, to the partition of Poland, which he had never ceased to reprobate, are the following remarkable words—"Hereafter the world will have cause to rue this iniquitous measure, and they most who were most concerned in it." Who, on reading this, will not immediately bring to remembrance the calamities and degradations sustained for so many years afterwards by Austria, Prussia, and Russia, and more particularly the former two, the actors in that spoliation,—under the iron gripe of Buonaparte? Will not these be immediately acknowledged as the unerring marks of retributive justice? Is it quite clear, notwithstanding the present calm, that the measure of retribution is full? Against the spoliation of the territory of France also, as of that of Poland,\* Mr. Burke laboured hard to teach the Allies the impolicy in 1792 and 1793, but he laboured in vain; and the con-

\* It seems to have escaped general notice, that the misfortunes of Poland in her final partition, may be in some degree attributed, however undesignedly on their part, to Mr. Fox and the Opposition, in the strong and unusual means made use of to thwart Mr. Pitt in the business of Oczakow. They lay claim, it is true, to the merit of having prevented war on that occasion. But if war had then taken place with England for one act of violence comparatively trivial, Russia, in all probability

sequences ultimately were, that condign punishment for the attempt which he anticipates for them throughout these letters. They may be considered indeed that great man's political will. The fulfilment of so many predictions is one of the most curious circumstances in modern history. At all times, it is true, dying words have been considered not merely impressive things, but in many instances have turned out surprisingly correct; and indeed if men are ever for a moment permitted by the Almighty to have the slightest degree of foreknowledge, it is probably near to the termination of life, when the mind, almost abstracted from its tottering tenement, and in some degree purified from temporal interests and passions, forms the most correct and unprejudiced estimate of surrounding circumstances,—of what is, and perhaps of what is to come. The sentiments of ordinary men at such times are worth serious consideration. But those of a wise and pre-eminent person, such as in the instance before us, distinguished through life for the possession of much penetration and knowledge, claim no inconsiderable portion of our reverence and regard.

It has been already observed, that though a decided advocate for war as the less evil to which the country was exposed, he condemned almost uniformly, after the first few months, not only some part of the principle, but almost the whole of the plan on which it was conducted. That it was most unfortunate is true; but though this would seem to corroborate Mr. Burke's judgment of the matter, it by no means finally decides the question against those who took the most active part in directing the separate measures. There were other differences, however, in his and in Mr. Pitt's views, which seem also to tell in favour of the superior sagacity of the former, and as they bore on what have since proved some of the leading points of the contest, may be worth enumerating.

Mr. Burke, from a very early period in its progress, declared that it would be an arduous and a long war.

Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, not only publicly in the House of Commons, but at his own fire-side, at his own table, and in the most unreserved manner to his confidential friends, maintained that the war would be short, and the superiority on our part not doubtful.

Mr. Burke, from the moment of the declaration of hostilities, entreated, nay, almost prayed, to the coalesced powers, that the integrity of the French territory should be preserved sacred and inviolate, as necessary, not only to their own immediate success, but to the future equilibrium of Europe.

Mr. Pitt, from the circumstances attending the surrender of

would not have ventured upon a second and still greater aggression, involving the existence of a nation, with the certainty of a second war. Nothing after all might have saved Poland from the combination then on foot against her; but it is certain that Mr. Pitt, from recent experience, had little encouragement to make the attempt.

her first towns to the Allies, pretty plainly intimated some intention of permitting her to be dismembered, and this is said to have been the first thing that thoroughly roused her to indignation, and to the most determined resistance.

Mr. Burke wished to have it perfectly understood in France, that the war was levelled at the faction which governed her, not against the nation.

Mr. Pitt thought it unnecessary or useless, in his public manifestoes, to be very precise in drawing the distinction between them.

Mr. Burke urged that from the peculiar nature of the contest, France should be attacked only in France, and that frittering away our force against her colonies, and even reducing them one after another, neither crippled her in the slightest degree, nor in point of fact advanced one step nearer to subduing her.

Mr. Pitt, by the sacrifices he made to effect these conquests, evidently attributed an importance to them which subsequent events by no means warranted.

At the conclusion of the struggle we have seen all Mr. Burke's opinions verified or followed to the very letter. The war proved trying and long beyond precedent. France to be overpowered was obliged to be attacked in France. The allied Sovereigns, who in self-defence had to attack the old root of jacobin aggression which had sprouted afresh in the form of an Emperor, found it necessary to come forward and declare that they made war, not upon her, but upon her ambitious ruler. And with some hundreds of thousands of men at their backs, which would have seemed to place the country at their nod, they were obliged explicitly to declare and to guarantee the strict integrity of her territory before they could hope to succeed in their design.

In all the later writings of Burke, taking the passages almost at random, they give us his idea of the *spirit* in which, in the first instance at least, the war was attempted to be carried on.

"It was not of that sort of war," alluding to the selfish and interested motives of the Allies, "that I was amongst the least considerable, but amongst the most zealous advisers; and it is not by the sort of peace now talked of that I wish it concluded. It would answer no great purpose to enter into the particular errors of the war. *The whole has been but one error.* It was but nominally a war of alliance. As the combined powers pursued it, there was nothing to hold an alliance together. There could be no tie of *honour*, in a society for pillage."

"They (the combined powers) were easily led to consider the flames that were consuming France not as a warning to protect their own buildings, (which were without any party wall, and linked, by a contiguation, into the edifice of France,) but as an happy occasion for pillaging the goods and for carrying off the materials of their neighbour's house. Their provident fears were



changed into avaricious hopes. They carried on their new designs without seeming to abandon the principles of their old policy. They pretended to seek, or they flattered themselves that they sought, in the accession of new fortresses, and new territories, a *defensive security*.”† \* \* \*

“This error obliged them, even in their offensive operations, to adopt a plan of war, against the success of which there was something little short of mathematical demonstration. They refused to take any step which might strike at the heart of affairs. They seemed unwilling to wound the enemy in any vital part. They acted through the whole as if they really wished the conservation of the jacobin power; as what might be more favourable than the lawful government to the attainment of the petty objects they looked for. They always kept on the circumference; and the wider and remoter the circle was, the more eagerly they chose it as their sphere of action in this centrifugal war. The plan they pursued in its nature demanded great length of time. In its execution they who went the nearest way to work were obliged to cover an incredible extent of country. It left to the enemy every means of destroying this extended line of weakness. Ill success in any part was sure to defeat the effect of the whole. This is true of Austria. *It is still more true of England*.”‡

Of the war policy which led us to expensive and destructive expeditions to the West Indies and other places, he says—

“A remote, an expensive, a murderous, and, in the end, an unproductive adventure, carried on upon ideas of mercantile knight-errantry, without any of the generous wildness of Quixotism, is considered as sound, solid sense; and a war in a wholesome climate, a war at our door, a war directly on the enemy, a war in the heart of his country, a war in concert with an internal ally, and in combination with the external, is regarded as folly and romance.”§

Similar disapprobation of the policy of our cabinet is expressed in the last political paper to which he gave his mind, dictated about two months before his death:—||

“Nothing is more notorious than that I have the misfortune of thinking, that no one capital measure relative to political arrangements and still less that a new military plan for the defence of either kingdom (Ireland is included) in this arduous war, has been taken upon any other principle than such as must conduct us to inevitable ruin.”

Mr. Windham constantly supported his views, but is understood to have been over-ruled by his colleagues in the Ministry.

An incident which occurred about this time is said to have given him as poor an opinion of Mr. Pitt's taste and virtù as he entertained of the measures of his Cabinet. The grand Duke of

† Letters on Regicide Peace.

‡ Letters on Regicide Peace.

§ Burke's Works, vol. viii. p. 232, 8vo. ed.

|| Ibid. vol. ix. p. 455.

Florence, pressed at this moment for money, and in dread of losing his magnificent collection of works of art without any equivalent by the rapid progress of the French in Italy, is reported to have offered to send them to this country as security for the loan of 200,000*l.* and to become permanently the property of England if the money should not be returned in ten years. This proposal the Minister declined; finding perhaps that he had already quite as many claimants upon his ways and means as he could well satisfy.

A present of the "Letters on a Regicide Peace" were sent to His Serene Highness the Hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg, who was then in England, a short time before Mr. Burke quitted Bath, accompanied by the following note:—

"The author of the Letters which his kinsman will have the honour of laying before the Prince of Wurtemberg, would not have presumed to think them in the smallest degree worthy of being so presented, if the extraordinary condescension of His Serene Highness had not made it his duty to acknowledge his respectful sense of that condescension by such an offering to it as was alone in his power.

"He would have presented himself personally, according to His Serene Highness's gracious permission, signified to him through his friend Sir John Hippisley, to pay the homage which every one owes to the rank and virtues of the Prince of Wurtemberg, but he did not choose to affect his compassion by exhibiting to His Serene Highness the remains of an object worn out by age, grief, and infirmity, and condemned to perpetual retreat.

"The author is convinced that the favourable sentiments of the Prince in regard to those letters, are not owing to the talents of the writer, but to the cause which he has undertaken, however weakly, to defend, and of which His Serene Highness is the protector by situation and by disposition.

"The author hopes that if it should please God, by his all-powerful interposition, to preserve the ruins of the civilized world, His Serene Highness will become a great instrument in its necessary reparation; and that not only in the noble estates which comprise his own patrimony, but in the two great empires in which he has so natural and just an influence, as well as in the third,\* which His Serene Highness is going to unite in interest and affection with the other two. In this he will co-operate with the beneficial and enlarged views of the illustrious house and its virtuous chief, who are on the point of having the happiness of his alliance. To the complete success of that alliance, public and domestic, some of the author's latest and most ardent vows will be directed!

\* Great Britain; in allusion to the projected marriage of the Prince with the Princess Royal of England.

“In the great task allotted to the Sovereigns who shall remain, His Serene Highness will find it necessary to exercise in his own territories, and also to recommend wherever his influence shall reach, a judicious, well-tempered, and manly severity in the support of law, order, religion, and morals; and this will be as expedient for the happiness of the people, as it will be to follow the natural bent of his own good heart, in procuring, by more pleasant modes, the good of the subject, who stands every where in need of a firm and vigorous, full as much as of a lenient and healing government.

“With sentiments of the most profound regard, His Serene Highness’s most faithful and obliged servant,

“EDMUND BURKE.

“Bath, 28th April, 1797.

The sagacity which had enabled Mr. Burke to penetrate the unhappy results in the train of the French Revolution, and the consequent energy and pertinacity with which he opposed it both in speaking and in writing, excited among many persons who had not the same length of view as himself, or indeed no conception whatever of the evils impending, a variety of conjectures as to the cause. At first they were merely surprised at the boldness of his predictions; but when he seemed determined to act upon them, by the breach which took place with his party for what they thought no more than speculative differences of opinion, they put him down as but a remove from insanity; an idea which was afterwards industriously circulated, and to which he partly alluded, after a vehement sally in the House of Commons, by a deliberate address to the chair in the words of St. Paul, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness.” To an observation of his niece one day on the violence and absurd rumours by which he was incessantly assailed, he replied, “Some part of the world, my dear—I mean the Jacobin part of it—even think or affect to think that *I* am mad; but believe me, the world twenty years hence will, and with reason too, think from their conduct that *they* must have been mad.” With those who found an interest in decrying his public exertions, the rumour was frequently renewed, particularly after the death of his son, when his grief was known to be extreme; and it sometimes had the effect even of imposing upon his friends, an instance of which occurred soon after the publication of the “Letter to a Noble Lord.”

A report, under the guise of seeming precaution and secrecy, reached them in town that he was afflicted with such total alienation of mind as to wander about his park during the day, kissing his cows and horses; a circumstance which, if true, would be no more than is daily done by many honest and fond farmers and stable-boys, without any imputation upon them of a wandering



of the wits; and which with Mr. Burke's warm affection towards the dumb as well as the speaking members of his establishment would have been no great matter for wonder, as he had in fact some favourite cows \* who, to be more under his own eye, were put to graze near the house. A man of rank, however, left London instantly to learn the particulars, and was received in the usual manner of an old friend without his observing any perceptible change in his host. Not quite satisfied with this tacit contradiction, yet deeming it indecorous to ask questions on the subject, he adverted in conversation to the public circumstances of the moment, and to the probable train of any new studies by his host as affecting them, when the latter, unsuspecting of the drift of the visitor, produced some of the most eloquent and ably-argued passages from the Letters on Regicide Peace, which he was then writing. Convinced now of his information being erroneous, if not malicious, he hinted to Mrs. Burke the main purport of his journey, when he received the detail of the following singular and affecting incident, which probably formed the foundation for the story, though it had thriven marvellously in the journey from Beaconsfield to London.

A feeble old horse, which had been a great favourite with the junior Mr. Burke, and his constant companion in all rural journeyings and sports, when both were alike healthful and vigorous, was now in his age, and on the death of his master, turned out to take the run of the park for the remainder of his life at ease, with strict injunctions to the servants that he should neither be ridden nor molested by any one. While walking one day in solitary musing, Mr. Burke perceived this worn-out old servant come close up to him, and at length, after some moments spent in viewing his person, followed by seeming recollection and confidence, deliberately rested its head upon his bosom. The singularity of the action itself, the remembrance of his dead son, its late master, who occupied much of his thoughts at all times, and the apparent attachment and almost intelligence of the poor brute as if it could sympathize with his inward sorrows, rushing at once into his mind, totally overpowered his firmness, and throwing his arms over its neck, he wept long and loudly.

His bodily health, however, though not his intellectual powers, had been for some time in a very declining state, until it terminated in a degree of general debility and loss of muscular power which rendered exertion and his usual degree of exercise impracticable. To this state of unexpected, at least, if not premature, decay, his habits of application, literary pursuits, and former laborious Parliamentary exertions, no doubt tended, when

\* A pretty piece, by Reinagle, delineating the house and grounds, represents Mr. Burke in front of the mansion patting a favourite cow, and his lady and a female friend walking at a little distance.

his frame, shaken by the loss of his son, and his mind dispossessed of that buoyancy which his fond paternal hopes inspired, had no active power or principle left to counteract the usual inroads of infirmity. That loss he found it impossible to forget or to recover; and thenceforward constantly gave way to the most afflicting grief, and as the reader has observed, to the most pathetic lamentations. Those who did not know his disposition, fancied he sustained much annoyance from the numerous attacks of the partizans of the French opinions, who, by writing in a variety of periodical publications, possessed of course the strong holds of the press; and the letters on Regicide Peace proved a new stimulus to their renewed hostility, no less than eight or nine answers having appeared within a few weeks. No pain, however, was inflicted by these missiles; the writings of the lower class of opponents he rarely saw and never heeded; the attacks of the higher, in the way of argument, he answered and refuted; the mere abuse of either he despised. Of the latter, an instance occurred about this time which furnishes a pretty good sample of the *justice* with which he was commonly assailed.

A bookseller named Owen, who published the Letter to a Noble Lord, and was in the meantime intrusted with the MS. of the first two letters of Regicide Peace for publication, represented to some friends of their author who called upon him to account for the profits of the first work, that these had been surrendered to him by that gentleman as a gift. This story Mr. Burke had no other means of disproving than by his word to the contrary, which no one who knew him could for a moment disbelieve. Unwilling however to enter into a contest on such a matter with such a man, he put up with the loss. This was not all; for with the characteristic assurance of a pirate, Owen, as soon as he found that the manuscript of "Regicide Peace," was to be withdrawn out of his hands, published it on his own account, not only without the concurrence, but against the positive prohibition of the author. This impudent invasion of literary property he attempted, in a preface to the surreptitious copy of the work, to defend;\* it was stopped, however, by legal interference; and as an appropriate conclusion to such an unprincipled proceeding, his defeated cupidity found vent in an abusive advertisement against "Edmund Burke, the Pensioner."

\* One of the ablest critical journals of the time, in speaking of the work, thus noticed the transaction:

"Before we proceed to consider the more important parts of these interesting and extraordinary productions, our attention is naturally attracted by the strange competition which seems to prevail between the genuine and the surreptitious editions. It affords the first instance, as far as we recollect, of a literary piracy being openly avowed and defended. Hitherto no property has been thought more sacred than that of an author in his unpublished works. . . .

"It appears, from Mr. Owen's own statement, that he was entrusted with a manuscript with a view to publication;—subject certainly to the pleasure of the

This person, whose representations it is difficult to credit, used to say that his men, who carried to Mr. Burke the proof sheets of his publications for correction were so roundly rated for their mistakes, that at length none of them would venture to approach his house, particularly when any error greater than usual had been committed. He was therefore often obliged to take them himself. Dodsley's (his preceding publisher's) men told quite a different story. They represented him as affable and courteous (as was his custom indeed to the working class of people), taking particular pains to explain what he wished to be done, frequently ordering them liquor, and, on their withdrawing from the room, never permitting them to have the last bow. They were accustomed to remark that though he was sometimes surrounded by a large and apparently confused mass of papers, he could immediately put his hand upon any particular one which might be wanted.

Finding medical aid of little avail in restoring his health, Mr. Burke proceeded to Bath early in February, 1797, for the benefit of the waters, which in early life had proved so beneficial. Here he continued for about four months confined to his bed or to his couch the greater part of the time; "My health," said he, in a letter dictated at the time, "has gone down very rapidly; and I have been brought hither with very faint hopes of life, and enfeebled to such a degree, as those who had known me some time ago, could scarcely think credible. Since I came hither, my sufferings have been greatly aggravated, and my little strength still further reduced; so that though I am told the symptoms of my disorder begin to carry a more favourable aspect, I pass the far larger part of the twenty-four hours, indeed almost the whole, either in my bed or lying upon the couch from which I dictate this."

The letter from which this extract is taken was written upon the affairs of Ireland, in reply to one addressed to him from that country; and though, as we see, indited by snatches amidst pain and suffering, enforces with little diminution of force the same wise policy toward healing her internal divisions which he had always advised, but which still remains for some fortunate statesman to complete. He hints at something like the Union, by urging that the seat of her superior or *Imperial* politics should

author, and to every change of opinion which might take place in his mind. A trustee thus circumstanced had undoubtedly no more right to publish the work without the consent of the writer, than if the manuscript had been procured by breaking open the library at Beaconsfield. The defence set up by Mr. Owen not a little aggravates, in our opinion, the impropriety of his conduct. He informs us, that Mr. Burke, after having made him a present of the profits of his letter against the Duke of Bedford, sent some friends to demand an account of the sale of that publication. He does not tell us that he was actually compelled to refund these profits: he only affirms that he was *desired* to account for them; and this he offers in defence of an acknowledged breach of trust."



be in England; Ireland is hurt, he says, not by too much English but by too much Irish influence—by what he terms a small, bigoted, but more especially a selfish faction—“There is a great cry against English influence. I am quite sure that it is Irish influence that dreads the English habits.”

“I think,” it is added, adverting to the rebellious designs well known to be then in agitation, “that Great Britain would be ruined by the separation of Ireland; but as there are degrees even in ruin, it would fall the most heavily on Ireland. By such a separation Ireland would be the most completely undone country in the world; the most wretched, the most distracted, and, in the end, the most desolate part of the habitable globe. Little do many people in Ireland consider how much of its prosperity has been owing to, and still depends upon, its intimate connexion with this kingdom.”

Of the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, the source, it is to be feared, of most of the subsequent miseries which afflicted Ireland, he writes—

“Your mistake with regard to me lies in supposing that I did not, when his removal was in agitation, strongly and personally represent to several of his Majesty’s Ministers, to whom I could have the most ready access, the true state of Ireland, and the mischiefs which sooner or later must arise from subjecting the mass of the people to the capricious and interested domination of an exceeding small faction and its dependencies.”—It is added, that he had scarcely seen those Ministers since that representation—that they were then (1797) no friends of his, or of any one who held his opinions.—There is little doubt that Mr. Pitt felt jealous of his interference even in some points on which they did not materially differ; and on this business of the Roman Catholics, if we are to believe public fame, the Minister ultimately adopted his opinions. It appears likewise, that the junior Burke took so much interest in the success of this question as to converse with his father about it not more than half an hour before his death.

The day before he quitted Bath, the following letter was dictated to Mrs. Leadbeater, and signed by his tremulous hand; it was among the last dispatched of his private letters:—

“My dear Mrs. Leadbeater,—

“I feel as I ought to do your constant hereditary kindness to me and mine. What you have heard of my illness is far from exaggerated. I am, thank God, alive, and that is all. Hastening to my dissolution, I have to bless Providence that I do not suffer a great deal of pain.\* \* \* \* \*

“Mrs. Burke has a tolerable share of health in every respect, except much use of her limbs. She remembers your mother’s most good-natured attentions, as I am sure I do, with much grati-

tude. I have ever been an admirer of your talents and virtues, and shall ever wish most cordially for every thing which can tend to your credit and satisfaction. I therefore congratulate you very heartily on the birth of your son; and pray remember me to the representative of your family, who I hope still keeps up the school of which I have so tender a remembrance; though after so long an absence, and so many unpleasant events of every kind that have distracted my thoughts, I hardly dare to ask for any one, not knowing whether they are living or dead, lest I should be the means of awakening unpleasant recollections. Believe me to be, with the most respectful and affectionate regards, my dear Mrs. Leadbeater,

“ Your faithful friend,

“ And very humble servant,

“ EDMUND BURKE.

“ Bath, 23rd May, 1797.

“ P.S. Pray remember me to Mr. Leadbeater. I have been at Bath these four months to no purpose, and am therefore to be removed to my own house at Beaconsfield to-morrow, to be nearer to a habitation more permanent, humbly and fearfully hoping that my better part may find a better mansion.”

There is something very touching in the mild and cheerful tone of this resignation to the Divine will, as well as in the allusions to his usual residence being so near to where he had determined should be his final resting-place (Beaconsfield Church); and the release of his spirit from its infirm and fragile earthly inclosure to a state of more perfect freedom. Of this letter the late Bishop of Meath justly observed in a communication to the lady to whom it is addressed; “The great scene on which Providence gifted and allotted him to move was now closing; and no record can ever be produced to mark the leading features of his character so strongly as that you possess in this letter. It shows him still cherishing the early affections of his heart, among the higher cares which the station he had attained imposed upon him; and after having controlled the destinies of the world, as *all now* agree he did, by his later writings, turning his last thoughts to the retired, unassuming daughter of the friend of his youth.”\*

To Beaconsfield, therefore, where he had enjoyed so many of the honours and comforts of life, he returned to die; for there is something of satisfaction to the human heart in breathing our last and in depositing our bones in the spot where we have spent the most honourable and useful part of our being; “It is so far at least,” said he to some one just before quitting Bath, “on my way to the tomb, and I may as well travel it alive as dead.”

While awaiting the event which was delayed for a month

\* Poems by Mary Leadbeater, p. 323.

longer, he gave directions about the disposal of some of his papers, particularly desiring that the chief of those relating to the impeachment should be published, repeating the same opinion of the whole proceeding which he had always expressed. Public affairs occupied much of his thoughts to the last moment; "Never," said he, "succumb to the enemy; it is a struggle for your existence as a nation; and if you must die, die with the sword in your hand; but I have no fears whatever for the result; there is a salient, living principle of energy in the public mind of England which only requires proper direction to enable her to withstand this or any other ferocious foe; persevere therefore till this tyranny be overpast." To his own increasing weakness he submitted with the same placid and christian-like resignation, undisturbed by a murmur; hoping, as he said, to obtain the divine mercy through the intercession of a blessed Redeemer, which, in his own words, "he had long sought with unfeigned humiliation, and to which he looked with a trembling hope."

Shortly before the fatal event took place, Earl Fitzwilliam communicated to Mr. Fox the information that it could not be far distant, and that gentleman having sent off a letter of inquiry on the subject to Mrs. Burke, received next day by express an answer couched in nearly the following terms. Whatever may be the opinion of the rigidity with which the subject of this note performed what he thought his duty, it is impossible not to admire the exalted principle which prompted it.

"Mrs. Burke presents her compliments to Mr. Fox, and thanks him for his obliging inquiries. Mrs. Burke communicated his letter to Mr. Burke, and, by his desire, has to inform Mr. Fox that it has cost Mr. Burke the most heart-felt pain to obey the stern voice of his duty in rending asunder a long friendship, but that he deemed this sacrifice necessary; that his principles remained the same; and that in whatever of life yet remained to him, he conceives that he must live for others and not for himself. Mr. Burke is convinced that the principles which he has endeavoured to maintain are necessary to the welfare and dignity of his country, and that these principles can be enforced only by the general persuasion of his sincerity. For herself, Mrs. Burke has again to express her gratitude to Mr. Fox for his inquiries."

A presentiment almost of the moment of the final summons from the world seemed to have prevailed with him; for several of the previous hours were employed in sending messages of affectionate remembrance to absent friends, in expressing his forgiveness of all who had in any manner injured or offended him, and in requesting the same from all whom his general or particular infirmities had offended. He recapitulated his motives of action in great public emergencies, his then thoughts on the alarming state of the country, "the ruling passion even in death," gave some private directions connected with his approaching decease, and after-



wards listened attentively to the perusal, by his own desire, of some serious papers of Addison on religious subjects and on the immortality of the soul. These duties finished, his attendants, with Mr. Nagle of the war-office, a relation, were conveying him to his bed, when, indistinctly articulating a blessing on those around him, he sunk down and after a momentary struggle expired, July 9th, 1797, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. "His end," said Dr. Lawrence with great truth, "was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity. He appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await the appointed hour of his dissolution." "When I have revolved his various labours," writes the author of the Pursuits of Literature, after an animated apostrophe to his memory, "I would record in lasting characters, and in our holiest and most honourable temple, the departed orator of England, the statesman, and the christian, Edmund Burke! "*Remuneratio ejus cum Altissimo!*"

When examined after death, his heart was found to be preternaturally enlarged, affording some confirmation to the belief, if the common idea of the sympathy between the heart and the affections of the mind have any foundation in fact, that grief for the loss of his son killed him. An abscess had likewise formed in his side, which some of his medical attendants, among whom was Dr. Lynn, of Windsor, considered of a cancerous nature; and this, no doubt, formed the origin of that extreme debility of which he had latterly complained, and which had almost deprived him of the power of locomotion.

On the 15th of July he was buried, according to his own direction, in Beaconsfield church, in the same grave with his son and brother; the body being removed to the house of Mrs. Salisbury Haviland, in the town of Beaconsfield, the day before, for the convenience of a walking procession to the church, in which ceremony seventy members of the benefit society he had patronised, clad in mourning, preceded the corpse. "Soon after five o'clock," writes the antiquarian friend, whose communications have been already noticed, "an immense number of carriages had arrived in the town from London, and other places, which conveyed many distinguished members of both houses of parliament to pay the last mark of attention to the remains of this admired and celebrated man. I never witnessed a more imposing solemnity. It was not merely mourning in exterior; I knew many, more especially among the poorer classes, who felt, and showed that they felt, the loss of a friend. The pall was borne by

Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Earl of Minto.	Duke of Devonshire, K.G.
The Speaker of the House of Commons, now Lord Sidmouth,	Earl of Inchiquin, afterwards Marquis of Thomond,
The Duke of Portland, K.G.	Mr. Windham.
Earl Fitzwilliam.	Lord Chancellor Loughborough, afterwards Earl of Roslyn.

“ Few gentry of the surrounding country (as you have observed in your first edition) omitted to be in attendance on this occasion ; and all the neighbouring pulpits, in alluding to his loss, paid that tribute to his private virtues\* which none, whatever might be their political opinions, could well withhold.” Mr. Fox proposed in the House of Commons that he should be interred in the national receptacle for illustrious talents, Westminster Abbey—an honour, however, which he was informed the terms in which the will of the deceased was couched, quite precluded. The writer has been informed from authority which he cannot question, that this fact was communicated to Mr. Fox previous to his proposition being made in the House, and the inference drawn from it by some of Mr. Burke’s friends was, that as he knew the proposal could not be complied with, he introduced it to preserve a seeming show of liberality towards his memory which he did not in reality feel. This, it is to be hoped, is a mistake, or at least an erroneous conclusion. But it is true, that the reply of Mr. Fox to a letter of Mr. Nagle, who wrote off to him an account of the decease of Mr. Burke soon after it took place, and detailing some particulars of the conversation which preceded it, was a cold common-place.

\* An old Ballitore friend gave vent to very natural and sincere feelings on the loss of a friend, of whom the family had reason to be proud, in a piece from which the following is an extract :—

“ ON THE DEATH OF EDMUND BURKE.

“ ’Tis o’er :—that lamp is quench’d in endless night,  
Which Nature kindled at her purest flame ;  
By science fann’d,—if science could enhance  
A genius from which science caught new rays :  
No, ’tis not quench’d ; the spark ethereal lives,  
And it shall blaze along the track of time,  
While we, who joy’d beneath the radiant beam,  
Shall mix unheeded with our kindred clay.

That star is set, on earth to shine no more,  
On which admiring nations wond’ring gaz’d :  
That pow’rful stream of eloquence is dry,  
Which with commanding force o’erwhelm’d the mind.  
O ! mourn for this, that from a barren world  
Such excellence is fled ! But, public care  
Apart, in pensive solitude retired,  
Lamenting friendship drops the silent tear.

There tender recollection calls to mind  
The sweet benevolence which mark’d that mien ;  
That mien which unadmiring who could view ?  
’Tis hers, with soft regret and pleasing pain,  
To trace the social and domestic scene,  
Where, ever shining, most of all he shone.  
She saw the lib’ral hand, the healing balms  
Dispense unboasting ; and to haggard eyes,  
Bedimm’d with poverty, and pain, and care,  
The vivid rays of health, and hope restore.  
Th’ unvarying friendship, and the candid mind,  
Prompt to forgive, and ready to atone,  
Were his.—And O ! how close the tender ties  
Of father, husband, brother, bound his heart !”

In his will, a disinclination is expressed to unnecessary expense in his funeral, or to any posthumous honours, beyond a simple inscription on the flag stone, or on a small tablet on the church wall. This restriction, though in accordance with his common unpretending habits, may be considered an unusual instance of self-denial in a public man; for though rank, and honours, and money may be refused by such persons when alive, there are, perhaps, none who would decline the monumental brass, and marble, and inscription which conveys to posterity some intimation that their merits were at least in part estimated and valued by their contemporaries. His reason for adverting to the subject he expresses to be "because I know the partial kindness to me of some of my friends; but I have had in my life but too much of noise and compliment."—The first clause in this testamentary document marks in a manner equally striking, his piety, and his attachment to his departed kindred:—"According to the ancient, good, and laudable custom of which my heart and understanding recognize the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy only through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire to be buried in the church at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying that as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just." His brother-in-law, Mr. John Nugent, he bequeaths to the protection of his political friends, in order to provide for his interests; and to his "entirely beloved and incomparable wife, Jane Mary Burke," is given the whole of his property in fee-simple; leaving a legacy to his niece, Mrs. Haviland, whose husband was alive at the time the will was drawn up, of £1000.

On a tablet such as he desired, in the south aisle of Beaconsfield church, is the following inscription:—

Near this place lies interred all  
That was mortal of the  
Right Honourable Edmund Burke,  
Who died on the 9th of July, 1797, aged 68 years :

In the same grave are deposited the remains of his only son,  
Richard Burke, Esq., representative in Parliament for the  
Borough of Malton,

Who died the 2d August, 1794, aged 35 :

Of his brother Richard Burke, Esq., Barrister at Law,  
And Recorder of the City of Bristol,  
Who died on the 4th February, 1794 :

And of his widow Jane Mary Burke, who died on the 2d April,  
1812, aged 78.\*

\* A friend adds the family arms—

On a mural monument in the south aisle of Beaconsfield church—The arms of Burke impaling Nugent, sculptured in bold relief.

On a cross gules, the first quarter charged with a lion rampant sable—Burke impaling Nugent—Ermine, two bars gules—Nugent.

Crest—On a wreath, a mountain cat sejant guardant proper, gorged with a plain collar and chained or.



From the intimate connexion of this family with that of Haviland, it may not be extraneous to introduce, from the authority of the same antiquarian friend, the mortuary notices upon the latter in Penn church; the words of the inscription upon the General, few as they are, but expressive, being the suggestion of Mr. Burke.

“Near the vestry door, on a tablet sculptured with military trophies and other appropriate emblems, by Hickey—the arms of Haviland—argent three embattled castles sable, impaling—Aston—argent—a fess and in chief three lozenges sable—inscribed—here rest the remains of General William Haviland, late Colonel of the 45th Regiment of Infantry.—An experienced and successful commander without ostentation. A firm friend without profession. A good man without pretence. He died Sept. 16, 1784, aged 67 years.—Also of Mary, relict of Wm. Townly Balfour, Esq. of the kingdom of Ireland, who departed this life August 2, 1789, aged 56 years—after having, by her exemplary patience, pious resignation under a long and severe illness, impressed a genuine value upon those amiable qualities both of the understanding and of the heart, which made her the delight of all who knew her.—Also of Mary, wife of Samuel Ruxton Fitzherbert, Esq., of the kingdom of Ireland,—in whom simplicity of manners adorned a fine understanding—the love of her duty adorned the practice of it—and her affection was rendered inestimable by the sincerity and truth with which it was accompanied. She died Sept. 13th, 1786, aged 29 years. This monument, sacred to the memory of the best of husbands, an affectionate twin sister, and a dutiful daughter, is erected by their disconsolate survivor, Salisbury Haviland.

“Mrs. Salisbury Haviland herself was buried at Penn, October 6, 1807; and her unmarried sister, Abigail Aston, who had lived with her, was likewise interred Feb. 11th, 1814, aged 80 years.—And as the more humble friends of Mr. Burke’s family must not be forgotten in this list of the departed, it may be mentioned that those old and faithful servants, Webster and his wife, repose near the remains of their master, in the cemetery at Beaconsfield; the former dying in December, 1810, the latter in August, 1818.”

Mrs. Burke continued to reside at Butler’s Court, visited and esteemed by all the friends of her late husband, among whom Mr. and Mrs. Windham were at all times particularly attentive, until her death, April 2, 1812, being previously in a great degree crippled in the use of her limbs through rheumatism. It was believed for some time that she was the author of a novel published in 1800, called “Elliott, or Vicissitudes of Early Life,” but her friends universally disbelieve the fact, though the publisher of the work (Mr. Cawthorn) had some correspondence on the subject of it with a lady of that name residing at Beaconsfield, whom he

understood to be the widow of Edmund Burke. The real author however was probably a Mrs. Burke, who published the "Sorrows of Edith," and some other tales.

Some time previous to her death, Mrs. Burke sold the mansion and estate of Butler's Court to her neighbour, James Du Pré, Esq. of Wilton Park, for £38,500, reserving the use of the house and grounds during her life, and for one year after her death. Mrs. Thomas Haviland, the niece of Mr. Burke, lived with her until her decease, under the promise of being made her heir, which however did not take effect; she received however a legacy of £5000, the remainder of the property being bequeathed to Mrs. Burke's own nephew, Mr. Nugent. Mrs. Haviland was a most amiable and deserving woman, not unworthy of her relationship to her celebrated uncle, who, as we have seen in his letters, was always lavish in her praises.\* She retired to live at Brompton for the benefit of her health, and died there in March, 1816, at the age of forty-six.—Her son, Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, in consequence of Mr. Burke's brothers dying unmarried, becomes the lineal representative of the family, and as such has assumed the name and arms of his uncle, no other person standing in the same degree of relationship to that distinguished man. The library, and all the tokens of regard and admiration which he had received from the good and great of the world, devolved, with the bulk of the property, to Mr. Nugent. The pieces of sculpture which ornamented the house were sold by auction by Christie, and some of them now grace the British Museum.

An old and costly carved chair of particular workmanship, which had been for many years used in the House of Commons, was, upon some alteration there, displaced and presented to Mr. Burke. It was sold among his other remains, and purchased by Peregrine Dealtry, Esq., of Bradenham House, and after his decease in 1814 was presented by his sisters to Dr. Parr, who preserved it as one of the great ornaments and curiosities of Hatton. On his death, in March 1825, it was transferred by bequest to Dr. John Johnstone, of Birmingham, in whose possession it now is.

Butler's Court was burnt down on the morning of the 23rd of April, 1813, having been let to a clergyman named Jones, for the purposes of a school, in whose occupation the accident took place. It is remarkable that Cliefden, the seat of his intimate friend the Marquis of Thomond, only five miles distant, shared the same fate a few years before, being burnt down in May 1795. Cliefden is celebrated by Pope; and there his Majesty George IV.

\* Having occasion to consult an eminent surgeon in London (Sir C. B.), after being a widow, he fell in love with her, and being extremely rich, made an offer of a splendid settlement along with his hand, which, however, from some scruples as to the propriety of second marriages, she thought proper to decline.

passed some of his younger days. This house, as well as Butler's Court, was built upon the plan of Buckingham House, with a grand centre connected to wings by corridors.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

His Person—Manners—Habits—Conversational Powers and Sallies—Private Character—Ardour of Temper and reputed Irritability—Contemporary Opinions formed of him.

IN adverting to some of the public and private characteristics of this celebrated man, there will be found so much to commend, that simple justice may run the risk of being deemed indiscriminate panegyric. Against this the writer is solicitous to guard himself by giving, in addition to any estimate of those merits he may himself form, the opinions of others more competent perhaps to convey a correct judgment upon the matter, and who were well acquainted with the original, as well as with the facts they respectively state, and several of whom being opposed to him on political topics will not be suspected of bestowing undeserved praise.

To give a just representation of a great political character, whose life has been spent in the constant contention inseparable, in England at least, from the calling he pursues, is a laborious indeed, but not an impracticable undertaking. To give such a representation as shall be universally acceptable, is impossible. A statesman is at all times to the mass of the world an object of suspicion during, or near to, the time in which he lives. If there be two ways of construing his conduct, the unfavourable side is commonly taken; yet the contrary impression would be unquestionably nearer to the truth, for of all public men he is the most interested in doing, or in aiming to do, right, whether he looks to the continuance of present power, or to the possession of that which every man would have, if he could, namely, posthumous reputation. It is the duty, therefore, of the biographer or historian diligently to attend to this; to give even to a questionable character an attentive and impartial, if not a favourable consideration. This is the business not merely of common charity but of strict justice; for there is, notwithstanding such constant exclamations against poor human nature, much more of good among mankind than we are always willing to acknowledge. Many statesmen, therefore, however unpopular or imprudent in their politics, have not been without their public as well as private virtues. But, on the other hand, where no crimes are charged, where no suspicion attaches, and where even adversaries have been compelled to render praise, the task of the narrator is as easy as it is agreeable. Such is the case with Mr. Burke. Judged



therefore by this standard, he will be acknowledged to be not merely a great man, but an eminently good one, in whose character or conduct there will be found little which the most devoted admirer need be afraid to probe, little of human infirmity over which an enemy can triumph; for his errors, whatever they were, chiefly arose from pushing the passions of virtue to excess.

In person, he was five feet ten inches high, erect, well-formed, never very robust; when young, expert in the sports of his country and time, active in habits suited to his years until his last illness, and always, it scarcely need be added, particularly active in mind, having nothing of what he called "that master-vice, sloth," in his composition. His countenance in early life possessed considerable sweetness, and by his female friends was esteemed handsome. At a later period, it did not appear to be marked, particularly when in a state of quiescence, by that striking expression which, from the well-known qualities of his mind, many persons expected to see; but the lines of thought were evident, and when excited by discussion, there was an occasional working of the brow, occasioned partly by being near-sighted, which let the attentive observer into the secret of the powerful workings within. From this defective state of vision, he almost constantly, from about the year 1780, wore spectacles. An Irish literary lady of talent—and ladies are possibly the best judges of these matters—who enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance, thus describes him at the age of 50, in a letter to the present writer:

"He was the handsomest man I recollect to have seen; his stature about six feet, well-made, portly, but not corpulent. His countenance was such as a painter would find it difficult precisely to draw (and indeed I always understood they complained of the difficulty); its expression frequently varying, but always full of benevolence, marked, in my opinion, by strong intellect, and softened by sensibility. \* \* \* A full-length portrait of him hangs in the Examination Hall of Dublin University; the figure, features, and complexion are like his; but the countenance, as a whole, by no means does him justice. \* \* \* He was a most delightful companion, and had the art of rendering the timid easy in his company. His conversation, which was often serious and instructive, abounded at other times with wit, pleasantry, and good humour; whatever subject he spoke upon, and he spoke upon all, he excelled in, as if it had formed a particular study; and his language, though sometimes considered ornamented on public occasions, was distinguished by a fascinating simplicity, yet powerful and appropriate beyond what I can tell."—Another lady, with whose husband, who was a relation, he occasionally spent a day in Lamb's Conduit-street, in London, describes him nearly in the same terms—"His address frank, yet dignified; his conversation interesting and various; and, particularly to female society, playful and amusing in a high degree."—The best picture of him

is that painted by Reynolds in 1775, from which the engraving which accompanies this volume is taken; the original is in the possession of Earl Fitzwilliam, being bequeathed to him by Mrs. Burke. That which hangs in the Examination Theatre of the University of Dublin was taken at a much later period of life, the face shorter than in Sir Joshua's, with something of contemplative severity in the expression. A better likeness, as is commonly said, is that modelled in wax, and finely finished by T. R. Poole, who was medallion modeller to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; but it should be remembered that it was taken at a much later period of life than the picture by Sir Joshua.

Of the bust by Hickey, which has been noticed as having been recently presented by his nephew, T. Haviland Burke, Esq. to the British Museum, the history is somewhat curious. It appears that her late Majesty Queen Caroline, when Princess of Wales, professing great admiration of Mr. Burke, wrote to Mrs. Burke at Butler's Court, requesting permission for a cast to be taken from the bust in her possession, for a collection, which she was then making of the celebrated men of the British nation. Mrs. Burke, naturally desirous to have all due honour done to her late husband, and conceiving that this memorial of him could not be better or more safely placed than in royal custody, offered to her Royal Highness's acceptance a present of the bust itself. The offer was accepted. No such collection however as had been stated, was ever formed. At the sale of her Royal Highness's effects at Connaught House, the bust was found buried amid some household rubbish, and along with other things, received a place as an article of sale in the catalogue of the auctioneer. In this situation Mrs. Thomas Haviland heard of it, and gave a commission to have this relic of her uncle purchased privately; but the sum demanded being exorbitant, it was thought better to wait for the public sale. Here there was a strong contest for it with Turnerelli, the sculptor, who seemed extremely anxious for the possession of the bust, upon which he evidently put a high value; and to him, in consequence of a mistake of the agent employed by Mrs. Haviland, it was knocked down. A dispute arising, however, it was again put up. Turnerelli was in the mean time informed, that as a relation of Mr. Burke was desirous of possessing the object of contention, let him bid what sum he might, he would be outbid; and finding this to be the case, after one or two attempts, he gave up any further effort, and it was procured for comparatively a small sum.

Like Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke was somewhat negligent in common dress, being latterly distinguished by a tight brown coat, which seemed to impede all freedom of motion, and a little bob-wig with curls, which, in addition to his spectacles, made his person be recognized by those who had never previously seen him, the moment he rose to speak in the House of Commons. Though



an ardent lover of poetry, which he prized at every period of life, and more especially of that of Milton\* in particular as furnishing the grandest imagery in the language! yet, contrary to the common idea that love for poetry and music go together, he had little ear for the latter; Mr. Fox, it is known, had none at all; and it has been remarked as a singular coincidence that the ears of Mr. Pitt and Dr. Johnson should have been equally tuneless.

From some little peculiarity in his gait, which has been already noticed, Sir Joshua who, as an artist, had an eye to these things, used to say that it sometimes gave him the idea of his having two left legs. He received people frequently in his library and dressing-room; and here when busily occupied on important subjects, which during much of his parliamentary life was the case, he was accustomed to dictate letters and answers with facility. With writings intended for the press he was on the contrary fastidious, and took great pains with them by frequent and careful revision, whenever he aimed at making a strong impression; in these, therefore, there was nothing of carelessness. Blottings and erasures were of course numerous, so as to render his manuscripts frequently difficult to decipher to any one not accustomed to the task. The matter itself of his compositions was rarely altered, but the arrangement and illustration of it, and the turn of the sentences, not unfrequently. Habit, however, had rendered the most perspicuous modes of expression so familiar to him, that in this respect his most-hastily written and confidential communications offer little for censure.

His address in private life possessed something of a chivalrous air—noble, yet unaffected and unreserved, impressing upon strangers of every rank, imperceptibly and without effort, the conviction of his being a remarkable man. "Sir," said Johnson, to exemplify this, "if Burke were to go into a stable to give directions about his horse, the ostler would say, 'We have had an extraordinary man here.'" His manner in mixed society was unobtrusive, surrendering at once his desire to talk to any one who had, or who thought he had, the least claim to be heard: "Where a loud-tongued talker was in company," writes Cumberland, "Edmund Burke declined all claims upon attention." When Johnson one evening seized upon every topic of

\* Like Johnson, Goldsmith, and many others, he had a very poor opinion, as is evident in his letter of criticism on the arts to Barry, of Ossian; besides which, three-fourths at least, he said, of the productions ascribed to that ancient, he considered to be forgeries, so entirely, that the writer had not even tradition to build upon, though in others no doubt he had made use of local and romantic tales. "It was only a trick of cool Scotch effrontery," he once said, "to try the precise range of English gullibility; nothing but the blind nationality of Scotchmen themselves gave the least countenance to the imposture."



discourse that was started, and an auditor, after separating, remarked to Mr. Burke that he should have liked to hear more from another person, meaning him, "Oh no," replied the latter, "it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him." To the lower class of people, it has been remarked, he was always affable. When a youth, who was on a visit to him at Beaconsfield, treated the respectful salutation of a servant contemptuously, Mr. Burke called him aside, and terminated a remonstrance with him on the subject by saying, "Never permit yourself to be outdone in courtesy by your inferiors." Of literary society he was extremely fond, preferring it, more perhaps than his own political interests demanded, to that which was merely distinguished by rank and fashion; but after the deaths of his older friends he did not cultivate it as before.

His conversational powers partook of the same fulness of mind which distinguished his eloquence; they never ran dry; the supply for the subject always exceeded the demand. "Burke," said Johnson, "is never what we call hum-drum; never in a hurry to begin conversation, at a loss to carry it on, or eager to leave off." On many other occasions also the moralist celebrated the excellence, of "his talk," and though in some degree of a different character from his own, it was not less instructive, and little less forcible. Among friends, his sallies of thought were frequently of a serious cast, sometimes philosophical, sometimes moral, the elevation of the sentiment commonly forming a contrast to the unaffected simplicity with which it was delivered. A profound reflection, or great moral truth, often slipped from him as if by accident, without seeming to have cost any trouble in the elaboration; while Johnson's throes in the delivery of bright thoughts were obvious, and he took care, by his loud and authoritative manner, to *hammer* the offspring into his hearers. What we have of the sayings of Burke make us anxious for more; he has himself indeed drawn up the line-of-battle of his genius to the public gaze in his works, but who does not regret that he had no Boswell in attendance to note down the transient sallies of his social hours—to collect and arrange the flying squadron of his brain?

When Croft's Life of Dr. Young was spoken of as a good imitation of Johnson's style, "No, no," said he, "it is not a good imitation of Johnson; it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength; it has all the contortions of the sybil without the inspiration." Speaking of the new sect of philosophers of 1793, "These fellows," said he, "have a wrong twist in their heads, which ten to one gives them a wrong twist in their hearts also."

When told of Mr. Godwin's definition of gratitude in Political Justice, "I should take care to spare him the commission of that

vice by never conferring upon him a favour." "Swaggering paradoxes," he added, "when examined, often sneak into pitiful logomachies."

Of reasoning upon political theories, he observed, "The *majors* make a pompous figure in the battle, but the victory of truth depends upon the little *minor* of circumstances."

When a present of wine to the Literary Club was almost expended, he playfully observed, "I understand the hogshead of claret which this society was favoured with by our friend the Dean (Barnard) is nearly out: I think he should be written to, to send another of the same kind. Let the request be made with a happy ambiguity of expression, so that we may have the chance of his sending *it* also as a present." Dr. Johnson was voted secretary, or punningly, dictator for the occasion. "Were I your dictator," said the moralist, "you should have no wine. It would be my business, *cavere ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet*, and wine is dangerous. Rome was ruined by luxury." "If you allow no wine as dictator," said Burke, "you shall not have me for your master of horse."

Like Johnson, he preferred London as a place of constant residence, to avoid the inquisitorial remarks common in a country town. Boswell observes on this, "Mr. Burke, whose orderly and amiable domestic habits might make the eye of observation less irksome to him than to most men, said once very pleasantly in my hearing, 'Though I have the honour to represent Bristol, I should not like to live there; I should be obliged to be so much upon my good behaviour.'"

On the question whether a man would live his life over again if it were in his power, he used a very ingenious argument. "Every man (said he) would live his life over again; for every man is willing to go on and take an addition to his life, which, as he grows older, he has no reason to think will be better, or even so good as what has preceded."

He had a very poor opinion of the merits, literary or moral, of the "Beggar's Opera." "There is nothing exhibited in that piece (said he) which a correct man would wish to see, and nothing taught in it which any man would wish to learn."

At table his habits were temperate, preferring the lighter to the stronger wines, in opposition to Johnson's gradation of liquors, "claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes;" "then (said he) give me claret, for I like to be a boy, and partake of the honest hilarity of youth." At a later period of his life, when exhausted by mental exertion or attacks of indigestion arising from close application, he was accustomed to take large quantities of water as hot as it could be drank; "*warm* water, (said he) sickens, but *hot* water stimulates." In allusion partly to this habit, the writer of a piece in imitation of "Retaliation," who applies the different kinds of wine, as Goldsmith had done

dishes, to his characters—as port to Johnson, champagne to Garrick, burgundy to Reynolds, thus says of the orator :

To Burke a pure libation bring,  
Fresh drawn from pure *Castalian* spring ;  
With civic oak the goblet bind,  
Fit emblem of his patriot mind ;  
Let *Clio* as his taster sip,  
And *Hermes* hand it to his lip.

An amiable feature in Mr. Burke's disposition was a dislike to any thing like detraction, or that insinuation against private character too often tolerated even in what is called good society, which, without amounting to slander, produces nearly the same effects. When this occurred in his own house by any one with whom he was familiar, he would directly check it, or drop a hint to that effect ; “ Now that you have begun with his defects,” he would say, “ I presume you mean to finish with a catalogue of his virtues ;” and sometimes said, though mildly, “ censoriousness is allied to none of the virtues.” When remarks of this kind were introduced by others whom it might have been rude to interrupt, he took the part of the accused by apologies, or by urging a different construction of their actions, and, as soon as he could, changed the subject ; exemplifying the advice he once familiarly, but wisely, gave to a grave and anxious acquaintance, who was giving vent to some querulous lamentations, “ Regard not trifles, my dear Sir ; live pleasantly.”

A dispute occurring with the lord of the manor in which his property at Beaconsfield was situated, about the right of ownership in a number of oak trees which stood outside of his park-paling, it was referred, the value being considerable, to the decision of a court of law. So confident was his adversary of gaining the cause, that he had directed the bell-ringers to be in readiness, the moment the news arrived, to celebrate his victory. The result, however, proved directly contrary to what he expected ; and Mr. Burke's servants, thinking their master entitled to the same demonstration of village joy, upon his success, were proceeding to express it, when hearing what was going on, he gave peremptory orders to desist. “ It is bad enough to quarrel with a neighbour,” said he, “ without attempting to triumph over him ;” and added, when the intention of the other was urged, “ What *he* might have done is of no consequence ; it is necessary to consider what *I* ought to do.”

Johnson, who denied him scarcely any other talent or merit, would not admit that he possessed wit ; he always got into the mire, he said, by attempting it. Wilkes, however, who certainly was no mean judge of this faculty, thought differently ; so did Boswell ; so did Mr. Windham ; so did Mr. Courtenay, himself a wit, who thus commences an ode addressed to Mr. Malone, from Bath—



Whilst you illumine Shakspeare's page,  
 And dare the future critic's rage,  
     Or on the past refine ;  
 Here many an eve I pensive sit,  
*No Burke pours out the stream of wit,*  
 No Boswell joys o'er wine.

Dr. Robertson, the historian, maintained he had a great flow of wit, as his surprising allusions, brilliant sallies of vivacity, and novel and ingenious conceits, exhibited daily in his conversation and speeches in Parliament, furnished evidence. Dr. Beattie entertained the same opinion. Alluding to the disinclination of Johnson to admit the possession of this talent in men to whom the world generally allowed it, he says, in one of his letters, "Even Lord Chesterfield, and *what is more strange, even Mr. Burke*, he would not allow to have wit." Sir Joshua Reynolds likewise agreed in the opinion of his fertility in wit, observing, "That he has often heard Burke say in the course of an evening ten good things, each of which would have served a noted wit (whom he named) to live upon for a twelvemonth."

Nearly the same opinion was entertained and expressed by many successive Houses of Commons, and more especially by those members, and they were no small number, who smarted under its lash—and among whom there were frequent exclamations against what they termed "the wantonness of his wit and the licentiousness of his eloquence,"—the former a quality which, as an auxiliary in debate, when under prudent management, and subservient to something more solid, he found very effective ; Lord North was in this respect his only competitor, and Mr. Sheridan afterwards his only superior. Mr. Pitt, when he had no more effectual answer to give to his keener sallies, which was not unfrequently the case in the war of words they had so long carried on, used to term them, "the overflowings of a mind, the richness of whose wit was unchecked for the time by its wisdom;" and an able anonymous writer, during the American war, among other distinguishing characteristics of his mind, particularly points to his "sarcastic wit."

For Johnson's remark, however, there was some foundation in occasional fits of punning, to which he gave way round the social table among intimate friends, in order, as he said, to amuse the ladies ; and these were sometimes so indifferent as to draw down smart rallies from his niece, Miss French, with "Really, uncle, that is very poor." "There now, you have quite spoiled it ; we expected something better ;" but there was some little malicious pleasure even in his failures ; for the less credit he gained by his efforts, the more he was accustomed to smile at the disappointment of those who were in expectation of hearing something very fine. This punning spirit may be exemplified by the following conclusion of a note to Mrs. Haviland, in allusion to the military title of her husband :—"In order that I may turn over a new leaf with you, in wishing you, and all with you, in *General*, and in *parti-*

cular, a thousand and one happy years—when may every one of them, and even the odd one, be as pleasant, but a little more real than the Thousand and one Arabian Entertainments! This we all cordially wish. Mrs. Balfour is well, to all appearance, of all rheumatism. May you all be well of all complaints. God bless you. Yours ever, my dear Madam, Sirs, young and middle aged—for self, wife, and son, &c.

“EDMUND BURKE.”

His main strength in conversation, however, did not lie, like Johnson's, so much in cutting repartee, as in a more playful cast of jocularity, though by no means destitute of pungency; sometimes quaint and humorous, sometimes coarse enough, frequently of classical origin or allusion, as several of the specimens preserved by Boswell evince, but without the biting severity of the lexicographer which he characterized on one occasion very promptly and happily in reply to Dr. Robertson the historian, who observing that Johnson's rebukes were but righteous oil which did not break the head; “Oil!” replied Mr. Burke, “oil of vitriol!”

When his friend the Rev. Dr. Marlay was appointed to the Deanery of Ferns, “I do not like the name,” said he, “it sounds so like a *barren* title.”

Alluding to livings, he observed that Horace had a good one in view, in speaking of—*Est modus in rebus sunt certi denique fines*; which he translated, “a modus in the tithes and fines certain.”

When some one inquired whether the Isle of Man was worth a journey thither to see, “By all means,” said Mr. Burke, “the proper study of *mankind* is *man*.”

Boswell, when trying to give a definition of man, called him a *cooking* animal; “Your definition is good,” replied Mr. Burke; “I now see the full force of the common proverb, ‘there is reason in the roasting of eggs.’”

When the same industrious chronicler was describing some learned ladies assembled around, and vying in attention to a worthy and tall friend of theirs (Johnson), “Ay,” said Mr. Burke, “like maids round a may-pole.”

In allusion to the chairing of Mr. Wilkes, he applied to it Horace's description of Pindar's numbers, “*Fertur numeris lege solutis*,” altering the second word to *humeris*; he (Wilkes) is carried on shoulders uncontrolled by law.

Conversing with a young gentleman from Ireland of better birth and capacity than fortune, who was venting his indignation against the purse-proud arrogance of some Scotch trader who had, according to his account, made his money chiefly by dealing in *kelp*, and who, in consequence of his wealth, looked down with affected superiority on *gentlemen* by birth and by accomplishments, “Aye,” replied Mr. Burke, “he thinks

“Et genus et virtus nisi cum re vilior alga est.”

A much higher feature of his character than wit, was a fervent and unfeigned spirit of piety, cheerful but humble, unallied to any thing like fanaticism, and expressive of a deep dependence on the dispensations of Providence, traces of which are to be found in the letters of his boyhood; for having been early, by his own statement, taught to study the sacred volume with reverence, an intimate acquaintance with its lessons and phraseology rested on his mind, and may be seen in his subsequent writings and speeches, sometimes to a fault. In the great trial of his fortitude, the loss of his son, the most affecting lamentations are accompanied by confessions of his weakness, the vanity of his desires, and, whatever he might wish or think to the contrary, the superior wisdom of the Divine decree, in disposing of him as he thought proper. He preferred the Church of England to all others, as on the whole the most pure and estimable; like Johnson, he viewed the Roman Catholics with more favour than many others were inclined to show them; and going still further than him, professed strong regard for the dissenters, from which, if he ever swerved for a moment, it was in the alarming situation of the country in 1792, when the leaders of that body sunk the character of ministers of religion in that of a violent and very questionable order of politicians.

His moral character stood wholly unimpeached by any thing that approached to the name of vice. "The unspotted innocence, the firm integrity of Burke," said Dr. Parr, "want no emblazoning, and if he is accustomed to exact a rigorous account of the moral conduct of others (*in public matters*), it is justified in one who shuns not the most inquisitorial scrutiny into his own." Unlike some of his greatest contemporaries, he made neither the bottle nor the dice his household deities; he had no taste for pursuits that kill time rather than pass it; "I have no time," said he, "to be idle." In the country, the mornings, often at an early hour, were devoted to agricultural pursuits, with a zeal and intelligence which soon enabled him to assume and deserve the name of a practical farmer. In town they were usually appropriated to study, literary composition, or political business, bending his way, in the afternoon, to the House of Commons, whence he returned on the termination of business, sometimes to literary society, more frequently fatigued and occasionally fretted, to the soothing comforts of his own fire-side. "No wonder," said he, jocularly, on some occasions, "that my friend Charles (Fox) is so often more vigorous than I in the House, for when I call upon him in my way thither, jaded by the occupations of the day, there he is, just out of bed, breakfasting at three o'clock, fresh and unexhausted, for the contentions of the evening."

The same affectionate disposition which Mr. Shackleton remarked in the boy, continued through life in the domestic relations of the man; his duties there might be said, in a peculiar degree, to be his pleasures; and one of the best proofs of it was the cor-



dial attachment and unanimity prevailing in a large family connexion, of which he formed the centre. He never forgot an old friend or an obligation, often lamenting that his short tenure of power precluded the possibility of giving them, as he could have wished, substantial proofs of his regard. His philanthropy, which frequently drew praises from his political antagonists, was often appealed to by numerous begging letters, sometimes requiring a large portion of the morning to peruse and to answer; and his exertions for some of the superior class of applicants, such as literary men and others, were occasionally repaid with gross ingratitude. His hospitality was always greater than his means, and at no time did he appear to more advantage than when doing the honours of his house and table.

The Rev. Mr. Crabbe, who was well acquainted with him, adds his testimony to that of many others—"Of his private worth, of his wishes to do good; of his affability and condescension; his readiness to lend assistance where he knew it was wanted; and his delight to give praise where he thought it was deserved." "All know," continues he, "that his powers were vast, his acquirements various, and I take leave to add, that he applied them with unremitting attention to those objects which he believed tended to the honour and welfare of his country; but it may not be so generally understood that he was very assiduous in the more private duties of a benevolent nature; that he delighted in giving encouragement to any promise of ability, and assistance to any appearance of desert. To what purposes he employed his pen, and with what eloquence he spake in the senate, will be told by many, who yet may be ignorant of the solid instruction as well as the fascinating pleasantries found in his common conversation among his friends; and his affectionate manners, amiable disposition, and zeal for their happiness, which he manifested in the hours of retirement with his family."

Partaking something of the temperament of his country, his resentments were warm and open, though placable, but the instances in which they were exhibited were few in number, for, during a long and most tempestuous public life, he conciliated the esteem of his chief opponents, nor is it remembered that he was engaged with any of them in one hostile personal squabble. It has been said, with gross perversion of the truth, that he bore ill-will toward Mr. Fox after their quarrel. So far is this from being the case, that though freely condemning his politics, he spoke of him otherwise among his private friends with affection, by saying, "he was a man made to be loved; there was not a particle of gall in his composition;" and it has been shown that the nature of his politics alone prevented a renewal of as cordial a friendship as had ever existed between them. He valued himself, he said, for the regard that gentleman had once professed for him, and felt proportional regret on its cessation.

It may be true, perhaps, that he occasionally gave way to starts of irritability, but these were so transient as to be scarcely exhibited before they were subdued. A single instance of this kind occurring in public is commonly sufficient to fix the charge perpetually on him who displays it. Such was the case with Mr. Burke. Many stories are therefore told of him which are wholly untrue, and those that possess a shade of truth are much exaggerated. The following, which has been lately afloat in the magazines and newspapers, may be taken as a sample:—

“The irritability of Burke is well known, and was strongly exemplified on many occasions in Hastings’s impeachment, in his conduct not only towards his opponents, but also towards his colleagues. On one occasion, Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor had nearly fallen a victim to this infirmity. Burke had put a question, the only one, it is said, which he had ever put that was unexceptionable, both in substance and in form. Mr. Law, the late Lord Ellenborough, one of Hastings’s counsel, objected to it, and was stating the grounds of his objection, when, perceiving Mr. M. A. Taylor entering the manager’s box, he congratulated the House that the candour and legal experience of the learned manager, meaning Mr. Taylor, would at once induce him to admit that such a question could not be put consistently with those rules of evidence with which his learned friend was so eminently conversant. Upon which, Mr. Taylor, who had never before been so respectfully referred to as an authority, (and who was worked upon like the crow in the fable, complimented on his singing), coming forward, requested the learned counsel to restate the question, which Mr. Law having done, Mr. T. instantly observed that it was impossible to contend that it was admissible. On this, Mr. Burke, forgetting every thing but his question, seized Mr. Taylor by the collar, exclaiming, ‘You little villain! put him in irons, put him in irons!’ dragged him down, and had almost succeeded in throttling him, when Mr. Fox came in to his rescue. The scene is by no one more pleasantly described than by Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor himself.”

To analyze critically the truth of this story, made up, probably, to divert a dinner company, or coined, perhaps, by one of those ingenious gentlemen who is asked to dinner for the sake of his stories, may be akin to that misapplication of labour, which would “break a butterfly on the wheel.” But as there are in it some pretensions to authenticity, a few words may settle that matter with the reader.

We are, in the first place, told that Mr. M. A. Taylor had nearly *fallen a victim* to this alleged infirmity of Burke, which, in other words, means that the latter, not having the fear of God or of the Peers before his eyes, was on the point of committing murder, or manslaughter, in Westminster Hall. This, indeed, looking to the light way in which the matter is treated, may only be an

attempt by the ingenious author at that striking figure of speech termed hyperbole; and considering that the provocation to this violence was so heinous, and that the nobility of the land, the judges, lawyers, and spectators were silent witnesses of it, this rhetorical effort at accurate description must be considered as very happily judged.

We next learn that the question put by this eloquent almost-homicide, was unexceptionable; but then it is insinuated, with equal gravity, and no doubt correctness, that it was the only one among innumerable questions that was so. Yet, even to this unexceptionable among the exceptionables, the lawyer objects. Whether this ingenious and vigorous satire be directed against Mr. Burke or Mr. Law, the reader will at once detect its accuracy and point.

Mr. Taylor is then introduced upon the scene for the humorous purpose, (putting the contemptuous simile of the crow out of the question) of making himself appear

“————— A tool  
“That knaves do work with, call'd a fool.”

This is a particularly happy hit of the author of the story, considering that he makes Mr. Taylor himself the narrator of his own vanity and folly.

Worse, still worse, remains behind. Poor Mr. Taylor is no sooner represented as flattered into an absurdity by Mr. Law, than he is ludicrously figured to us as buffeted (we presume out of it) by Mr. Burke; he is seized by the throat—called “a little villain”—dragged about—almost strangled, and, finally, rescued by Mr. Fox: but in what light poor Mr. Taylor viewed this novel species of persuasion from the great orator of the age, or whether he resented it, does not appear. No doubt, if this story-teller be believed, he considered it as a capital joke; and his taste in this way not being fastidious, and his resentments not strong, he continued to follow the train of his leader, in the expectation, perhaps, of experiencing a few more such practical jokes, for the pleasure of retailing them to his friends. How the offended dignity of the Peers relished this joke, is likewise left to conjecture. We must suppose that their lordships were asleep; the judges deeply occupied in consultation; the lawyers turned aside from looking at the managers to the perusal of their papers; the historian of the trial asleep; and the spectators all blinded by the dust raised by the scuffle—for none of them heard or saw anything of this new display of manual rhetoric.

Not one of the least merits of Mr. Burke was in being so perfectly free from any thing like envy or jealousy of contemporary talent, as often to surrender to others during the first sixteen years of his Parliamentary life, the reputation of constitutional measures, which he not only suggested, but chiefly achieved. The



Nullum Tempus act, the Jury bill, the first relief to the roman catholics, and many others, were of this class. It may appear strange, or a very unusual effort of generosity, that any public man who had to work up-hill every step of his way to eminence should do this to a certain degree in his own wrong by withholding from himself to bestow upon others that which was calculated to ensure honest and undisputed fame ; but the fact was *he* always looked to the success of his party, while *others* regarded that which was chiefly personal to themselves. He alludes with evident satisfaction, to this liberality of spirit in the retrospect of his political career contained in the Letter to a Noble Lord. In speaking of the popularity and lead he had acquired in the troubled period, from 1780 to 1782, “when wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods, and prowled about our streets in the name of reform ;” he says—

“I know well enough how equivocal a test this kind of popular opinion forms of the merit that obtained it. I am no stranger to the insecurity of its tenure. I do not boast of it. It is mentioned to show, not how highly I prize the thing, but my right to value the use I made of it. I endeavoured to turn that short-lived advantage to myself into a permanent benefit to my country.

“Far am I from detracting from the merit of some gentleman, out of office, or in it, on that occasion. No!—It is not my wish to refuse a full and heaped measure of justice to the aids that I receive. I have, through life, been willing to give every thing to others, and to reserve nothing for myself, but the inward conscience that I had omitted no pains to discover, to animate, to discipline, to direct the abilities of the country for its service and to place them in the best light to improve their age, or to adorn it ;—this conscience I have. I have never suppressed any man ; never checked him for a moment in his course by any jealousy, or by any policy. I was always ready to the height of my means, (and they were always infinitely below my desires) to forward those abilities which overpowered my own ;—he is an ill-furnished undertaker who has no machinery but his own hands to work with.”

The allusions to Mr. Fox, in this passage, are obvious ; and to this discipline, teaching, and prompting there is no question but he owed much of his fame : he himself had the candour to acknowledge, on four different occasions, in the House of Commons, that to these he owed nearly it all.

The greatest defect of Mr. Burke approached so near to what is often a virtue, that it is sometimes difficult to draw the line between them. It was a heat, or ardour of temperament, which, by meeting with much opposition in pursuing a measure that he had once satisfied himself was right, sometimes became zeal, sometimes irritability, sometimes obstinacy, sometimes passion, in its support. “Exquisite powers,” writes Lord Buchan, in a

Letter to Bonomi, the artist, in allusion to this characteristic of Mr. Burke, "has its root in exquisite sensibility." And this peculiar sensitiveness of genius has been so often noted one of its marked features, that perhaps we are scarcely at liberty to lament what appears to possess some occult connexion with its very excellence. Frequent observation proves, that some of the strongest minds are under the dominion of very powerful feelings and passions, and by the stimulus which these supply to the reason, enable it to accomplish much which minds equally great, without such strong excitements, would be unable or afraid to attempt. Thus, the mild spirit of Melancthon never could have done the work of Luther, Calvin, or Knox. Thus, Mr. Fox, or Mr. Pitt, in all probability, could not have excited the public mind on the American war as Mr. Burke by the variety of his powers and passions excited it. It is almost certain that they could never have rendered popular the trial of Mr. Hastings, as was done at least for a time by him. It is unquestionable that it was not within the range of the powers of either, singly, to influence the nation as he influenced it on the question of the French Revolution. Men constituted as he was, uniting extraordinary acquirements with invincible zeal, perseverance, and genius, are peculiarly cut out by nature for important and trying exigencies. He has a remark himself somewhere, that "a vigorous mind is as necessarily accompanied with violent passions as a great fire with great heat." "Strong passion," said he, at another time, and the observation displays much knowledge of character, "under the direction of a feeble reason feeds a low fever, which serves only to destroy the body that entertains it. But vehement passion does not always indicate an infirm judgment. It often accompanies, and actuates, and is even auxiliary to a powerful understanding; and when they both conspire and act harmoniously, their force is great to destroy disorder within and to repel injury from abroad." "No revolution (in public sentiment), civil or religious," says Sir Gilbert Elliott, writing in 1758 to the historian Dr. Robertson, "can be accomplished without that degree of ardour and passion which in a later age will be matter of ridicule to men who do not feel the occasion, and enter into the spirit of the times."

Useful as this peculiar frame of mind is—and nothing great was ever accomplished without it—it is frequently prejudicial when carried into the discussion of ordinary affairs, or the common routine of opposition in the House of Commons, as Mr. Burke himself now and then experienced. It sometimes led him to express undue warmth and positiveness in matters of inferior moment, and by seeming to master his temper, was also believed by those who did not know him well, to interfere with the due exercise of his judgment. To many who neither saw so far nor so clearly into the tendency of measures as himself, it had the appearance of arrogance; to many, of dictation, of obstinacy, or intractability.

It gave rise not unfrequently to illiberal surmises that he must have some personal interest in matters which he urged with so much heat and pertinacity; and impaired the effect of his eloquence on the opposite benches of the body whom he had to address, by an opinion, however unfounded, that his views at times sprang from momentary passion or impulse, rather than from mature deliberation. Convinced in his own mind of being right, he was somewhat impatient of not being able to convince others equally soon; he did not perhaps make sufficient allowance for inferior understandings, for duller apprehensions, for more defective information; or always consider that as even obvious moral truths are of slow progress among the mass of mankind, so political truth, as involving a greater variety of interests, is received with still more caution, particularly from those who happen not to possess political power, and who are therefore suspected of aiming only to acquire it. He was early informed of this peculiarity in his public temperament, and expresses an intention to amend it so far back as 1777: the passage, which is remarkable for advising Mr. Fox to beware of the same error, is contained in the letter written to him in Ireland—"I remember some years ago, when I was pressing some points with great eagerness and anxiety, and complaining with great vexation to the Duke of Richmond of the little progress I made, he told me kindly, and I believe very truly, that though he was far from thinking so himself, other people could not be persuaded I had not some latent private interest in pushing these matters, which I urged with an earnestness so extreme and so much approaching to passion. He was certainly in the right. I am thoroughly resolved to give both to myself and to my friends less vexation on these subjects than hitherto I have done;—much less indeed. If *you* should grow too earnest, you will be still more inexcusable than I was. Your having entered into affairs so much younger ought to make them too familiar to you to be the cause of much agitation." On another occasion he adverted in the House to this distinction of character—"an earnest and anxious perseverance of mind which with all its good and all its evil effects is moulded into my nature." In private life it was never offensive and rarely observable, except when employed in pushing the interests of his friends, or in the duties of humanity and charity.

In examining a few of the more marked features of his mind, there will be found belonging to him peculiarities almost contradictory in their nature; qualities which, if not inconsistent with each other, have been so rarely conjoined in the same person as to be thought inconsistent. Some of the most striking are, a variety in his powers almost unbounded, a brilliancy which imposes upon the imagination, a solidity which convinces the judgment, a fancy singularly excursive in pursuit of striking and alluring figures, and which may be termed the presents of genius



to the service of persuasion and truth, and a wisdom which when employed in the affairs of mankind was rigidly pinned down to the plain and straight-forward, and that which was founded upon experience and practice. This is so unusual a combination that perhaps another instance is not to be found. He not merely excelled all his contemporaries in the number of his powers, but some in the peculiar excellence belonging to each; as for instance, we find him a tolerable poet even while a boy, a penetrating philosopher, an acute critic, and a judicious historian when a very young man; a judge of the fine arts, whose opinions even Reynolds valued, a political economist when the science was scarcely known in this country, or known to very few, a statesman often pronounced one of the wisest that ever adorned our country, an orator second to none of any age, a writer of extraordinary powers on every subject, and on politics the first for depth and eloquence in our language; and in addition to these, possessed of a vast and multifarious store of knowledge of which all who had any intercourse with him, whether friend or opponent, have spoken in terms of strong admiration and surprise. Like the celebrated Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, whose philosophy regarding matter he had once set himself the task to refute, there was nothing useful of which he could be said to be ignorant.

The testimony borne to his talents and acquirements during so many years by Dr. Johnson, a few of which have been repeated in this work, and more are to be found in Boswell's amusing volumes, would alone stamp the fame of any man. Even while travelling in the Hebrides this favourite topic of the great moralist was not forgotten: "I do not," said he to Boswell, alluding to what he considered inferior minds who had acquired a lead they did not deserve in public affairs, "grudge Burke being the first man in the House of Commons, for he is the first man everywhere."

Lord Thurlow, after so many years of political bickerings, and whose judgment in consequence was not likely to be biassed by undue partiality, spoke a language not less strong, when in a private company where there was some allusion to the comparative merits of the three great orators and statesmen of the age, he observed,—“The name of Burke will be remembered with admiration, when those of Pitt and Fox will be comparatively forgotten.”

The celebrated Mirabeau was known to speak of him more than once with great applause, and what was more singular, delivered in the National Assembly on several occasions large passages, with some trivial alterations from the printed speeches and writings of Mr. Burke, as his own; on being reproached with this once, he admitted the fact; apologising for it by saying that he had not had time to arrange his own thoughts on some of the many topics he was obliged to discuss, and that in no other

productions could he find such an union of argument and eloquence.

As coming from the pen of the scarcely less celebrated opponent of Mirabeau, the following possesses much interest; it was at first attributed to Peltier, but was really written by M. Cazalés; “Died at his house at Beaconsfield, with that simple dignity, that unostentatious magnanimity so consonant to the tenour of his life and actions, the Right Honourable Edmund Burke. There never was a more beautiful alliance between virtue and talents. All his conceptions were grand, all his sentiments generous. The great leading trait of his character, and that which gave it all its energy and its colour, was that strong hatred of vice which is no other than the passionate love of virtue. It breathes in all his writings; it was the guide of all his actions. But even the force of *his* eloquence was insufficient to transfuse it into the weaker or perverted minds of his contemporaries. This has caused much of the miseries of Europe; this has rendered of no effect towards her salvation the sublimest talents, the greatest and rarest virtues that the beneficence of Providence ever concentrated in a single character for the benefit of mankind. But Mr. Burke was too superior to the age in which he lived. His prophetic genius only astonished the nation which it ought to have governed.”

Mr. Windham, who was his devoted friend and admirer, often expressed similar sentiments, and in the same spirit as the concluding sentence of the preceding passage, wrote in a private letter about this time, what as a Minister it would not perhaps have been quite so decorous towards his coadjutors to say in public: “I do not reckon it amongst the least calamities of the times, certainly not among those that affect me least, that the world has now lost Mr. Burke. Oh! how much may we rue that his counsels were not followed! Oh! how exactly do we see verified all that he has predicted.”

On the first allusion to the French Revolution in 1790, Mr. Fox said that “his reverence for the judgment of his right honourable friend was unfeigned; for that if he were to put all the political information he had gained from books, all that he had learned from science, and all that the knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him, into one great scale, and the improvement he had derived from the conversation and instruction of his right honourable friend in the other, the latter would preponderate.” Some time afterwards he repeated that “from him he had learned nearly all his political knowledge.” At the moment of their disunion he observed, “that however they might differ on present matters, he must still look to his honourable friend as his master;” adding upon the same occasion, “He must again repeat that all he ever knew of men, that all he ever read in books, that all his reasoning faculties informed him of, or his fancy suggested to him, did not impart that exalted knowledge, that superior information, which

he had acquired from the lessons of his right honourable friend. To him he owed all his fame, if fame he had any. And if he (Mr. Fox) should now or at any time prevail over him in discussion, he could acknowledge his gratitude for the capability and pride of the conquest in telling him—

*‘Hoc ipsum quod vincit id est tuum.’* ”

At the moment of proposing his interment in Westminster Abbey, he again repeated the same acknowledgments in terms which, in the words of a Member in attendance, “drew tears from every one present who had any feelings at all, or could sympathize in the excellence of the great genius then before them, or with the still greater excellence of the genius who had departed.”

When some one expressed an opinion that Burke was sometimes only a sophist, though an extraordinarily eloquent one, Mr. Fox is said to have immediately remarked, that he entertained a very different opinion. “The eloquence of Mr. Burke,” continued he, “is not the greatest of his powers: it is often a veil over his wisdom: moderate his more vehement sallies, lower his language, withdraw his imagery, and you will find that he is more wise than eloquent: you will have your full weight of the metal, though you should melt down the chasing.”

“Burke,” said Mr. Gerard Hamilton (whom Mr. Grattan pronounced a great judge of men and things), at the period of their greatest coolness, “understands every thing but gaming and music. In the House of Commons I sometimes think him only the second man in England; out of it he is always the first.”

The unknown author of the *‘Pursuits of Literature,’* who seems to have no other point of agreement with Dr. Parr, agrees with him at least in rapturous eulogy of Mr. Burke, scattered through a variety of passages of his work, in verse and in prose, in Greek, in Latin, in English, and all of them in no ordinary terms, *‘First in the East,’ ‘Regent of Day,’ ‘Luminary of Europe,’ ‘great and unequalled man,’* “who opened the eyes of the whole nation to the systems of internal destruction and irreversible misery which awaited it, and who only displayed them to confound and wither them by his powers,” applying to him the praise of Paterculus to Cicero—

*“Animo vidit, ingenio complexus est, eloquentia illuminavit.”*

“Let me,” says Dr. Parr, “speak what my mind prompts of the eloquence of Burke—of Burke, by whose sweetness Athens herself would have been soothed, with whose amplitude and exuberance she would have been enraptured, and on whose lips that prolific mother of genius and science would have adored, confessed, the Goddess of Persuasion.” “Who is there,” adds the same learned critic, “among men of eloquence or learning more profoundly versed in every branch of science? Who is there that



has cultivated philosophy, the parent of all that is illustrious in literature, or exploit, with more felicitous success? Who is there that can transfer so happily the result of laborious and intricate research to the most familiar and popular topics? Who is there that possesses so extensive yet so accurate an acquaintance with every transaction recent or remote? Who is there that can deviate from his subject for the purposes of delight with such engaging ease, and insensibly conduct his readers from the severity of reasoning to the festivity of wit? Who is there that can melt them if the occasion requires with such resistless power to grief or pity? Who is there that combines the charm of inimitable grace and urbanity with such magnificent and boundless expansion?"

Mr. Curwen, whose political opinions have been already noticed, thus writes of him on viewing Ballitore, the scene of his early acquisitions in knowledge. "The admiration, nay astonishment, with which I so often listened to Mr. Burke gave an interest to every spot connected with his memory, and forcibly brought to my recollection the profundity and extent of his knowledge, while the energy, warmth, and beauty of his imagery captured the heart and made the judgment tributary to his will. As an orator he surpassed all his contemporaries, and was perhaps never exceeded."

Another Parliamentary contemporary and supporter previous to the French Revolution, but who was so incurably bitten by that event that he has never since recovered a sober understanding, acknowledges amidst several gross misrepresentations, "The political knowledge of Mr. Burke might be considered almost as an Encyclopædia; every man who approached him received instruction from his stores." "Learning," writes a contemporary of a different stamp, but who nevertheless never voted with him except during the period of the coalition Ministry, "waited upon him like a hand-maid, presenting to his choice all that antiquity had culled or invented; he often seemed to be oppressed under the load and variety of his intellectual treasures. Every power of oratory was wielded by him in turn; for he could be during the same evening pathetic and humorous, acrimonious and conciliating; now giving a loose to his indignation and severity; and then almost in the same breath calling to his assistance ridicule, wit, and mockery."

"As an orator," adds another adversary on the question of revolutionary politics, "notwithstanding some defects, he stands almost unrivalled. No man was better calculated to arouse the dormant passions, to call forth the glowing affections of the human heart, and to 'harrow up' the inmost recesses of the soul. Venality and meanness stood appalled in his presence; he who was dead to the feelings of his own conscience was still alive to his animated reproaches; and corruption for a while became alarmed at the terrors of his countenance. Had he died during the meridian of his fame and character he could scarcely have been considered second to any man either of ancient or modern times." The *meri-*

*dian of his fame and character* means, in this writer's opinion, before he assailed the French Revolution, and persons of similar sentiments all speak the same language; but the rest of the world who think differently and more justly, deem his exertions upon that subject the climax of his reputation and powers.

"His learning is so various and extensive," said the Rev. Thomas Campbell, author of the *History of Ireland*, "that we might praise it for its range and compass, were it not still more praiseworthy for its solidity and depth. His imagination is so lively and so creative, that he may justly be called the child of fancy; and therefore his enemies, for even he is not without them, would persuade us, that his fancy overbears his judgment. Whereas, this fine frenzy is, as it ought to be, only a secondary ingredient in the high composition of a man, who not only reflects honour on his native country, but elevates the dignity of human nature. In his most eccentric flights, in his most seemingly wild excursions, in the most boisterous tempest of his passion, there is always a guardian angel which rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm. His grand characteristic is genius, and ruling faculty is judgment, though certainly not of that cold kind which the law would call prudence; but his reason is enlightened by intuition, and whilst he persuades as an orator, he instructs as a philosopher.

"A nobleman of the highest station and abilities in England, though of an opposite party in politics, when he heard the petty minions of the day decry his powers, stopped them short, and said, 'Come, come, hold your tongue, the next age could not know that there was oratory in this, if Edmund Burke had not printed his speeches.' And Dr. Johnson, generally a niggard in panegyric, speaking of that parity of talents which is generally distributed to the sons of men, has been heard to say, that during his acquaintance with life, he knew but two men who had risen considerably above the common standard; the one was Lord Chatham, the other was Edmund Burke."

"His eloquence," said Mr. Wilberforce on another occasion—and it was rarely their lot to agree on political matters—"had always attracted, his imagination continually charmed, his reasonings often convinced him. Of his head and of his heart, of his abilities and of his humanity, of his rectitude and of his perseverance, no man could entertain a higher opinion than he did."

A critic of considerable repute thus indirectly alludes to the oratory of Mr. Burke, in analysing that of Mr. Grattan—

"It is not the roundness, the *ore rotundo* of Mr. Pitt; it is not the simple majesty of Mr. Fox; it is not the brilliancy of Mr. Sheridan. Occasionally we caught a tint, a feature of resemblance to Mr. Burke, but he has not that commanding figure and manner, that volume of voice, that superabundant richness and fertility of fancy, that vast grasp and range of mind which Mr. Burke possessed beyond all other created beings."

To these might be added some hundreds of similar eulogies of his character and powers from inferior men; language indeed has been nearly exhausted in characterizing them; and the terms "a vast storehouse of knowledge," "an illustrious man," "a wonderful man," "an unequalled man;" "a mighty mind," "an all-knowing mind," "a boundless mind," "an exhaustless mind," "the most consummate orator of the age," "the greatest orator and wisest statesman of modern times," occur to the reader of nearly every work, untainted by party spirit, in which he is mentioned.

In this enumeration, the character drawn of him by his intimate friend Dr. French Lawrence must not be omitted. After mentioning his death some time in the night of July 8, 1797, he says—

"His end was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity: he appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await the hour of his dissolution. He had been listening to some Essays of Addison's, in which he ever took delight; he had recommended himself, in many affectionate messages, to the remembrance of those absent friends whom he had never ceased to love; he had conversed some time with his accustomed force of thought and expression on the awful situation of his country, for the welfare of which his heart was interested to the very last beat; he had given with steady composure some private directions, in contemplation of his approaching death; when, as his attendants were conveying him to his bed, he sunk down, and, after a short struggle, passed quietly, and without a groan to eternal rest, in that mercy which he had just declared he had long sought with unfeigned humiliation, and to which he looked with a trembling hope!

"Of his talents and acquirements in general, it is unnecessary to speak. They were long the glory of his country, and the admiration of Europe; they might have been (had it so consisted with the inscrutable counsels of divine Providence!) the salvation of both. If not the most accomplished orator, yet the most eloquent man of his age; perhaps second to none in any age: he had still more wisdom than eloquence. He diligently collected it from the wise of all times; but, what he had so obtained he enriched from the vast treasury of his own observation; and his intellect, active, vigorous, comprehensive, trained in the discipline of true philosophy, to whatever subject he applied it, penetrated at once through the surface into the essential forms of things.

"With a fancy singularly vivid, he least of all men, in his time, indulged in splendid theories. With more ample materials of every kind than any of his cotemporaries, he was the least in his own skill to innovate. A statesman of the most enlarged views—in all his policy he was strictly practical; and in his practice he always regarded, with holy reverence, the institutions and manners



derived from our ancestors. It seemed as if he had been endowed with such transcendent powers, and informed with such extensive knowledge, only to bear the more striking testimony, in these days of rash presumption, how much the greatest mind is singly inferior to the accumulated efforts of innumerable minds in the long flow of centuries.

“His private conversation had the same tincture with his public eloquence. He sometimes adorned and dignified it with philosophy, but he never lost the charm of natural ease. There was no subject so trivial which he did not transiently illuminate with the brilliancy of his imagination. In writing, in speaking, in the senate, or round the table, it was easy to trace the operations of the same genius.

“To the Protestant religion, as by law established, he was attached from sincere conviction; nor was his a barren belief, without influence on his moral conduct. He was rigid in the system of duties by which he regulated his own actions; liberal in construing those of other men; warm, but placable; resenting more the offences committed against those who were dear to him, than against himself; vehement and indignant only where he thought public justice insulted; compassionate to private distress; lenient to suffering guilt. As a friend, he was, perhaps, too partial to those he esteemed; over-rating every little merit, overlooking all their defects; indefatigable in serving them; straining in their favour whatever influence he possessed; and, for their sakes more than his own, regretting, that during so long a political life, he had so seldom bore any share in power, which he considered only as an instrument of more diffusive good. In his domestic relations he was worthy, and more than worthy he could not be, of the eminent felicity which for many years he enjoyed; a husband of exemplary tenderness and fidelity; a father fond to excess; the most affectionate of brothers; the kindest master; and, on his part, he has often been heard to declare, that in the most anxious moments of his public life, every care vanished when he entered his own roof.

“One, who long and intimately knew him, to divert his own sorrow, has paid this very inadequate tribute to his memory. Nothing which relates to such a man can be uninteresting or uninteresting to the public, to whom he truly belonged. Few, indeed, whom the divine goodness has largely gifted, are capable of profiting by the imitation of his genius and learning; but all mankind may grow better by the study of his virtues.”\*

\* Of Dr. Lawrence himself, for a long period the valued acquaintance of Mr. Burke, the reader may not be displeased to see the following, printed in the newspapers soon after his decease:—

“To the formidable catalogue of eminent deceased characters, who have successively been snatched from society within the last few years, is now to be added the name of French Lawrence, LL.D. and Member of Parliament for Peterborough,

Much the greater part of these praises were bestowed by persons who knew him, not merely in the casual bustle of political life, but in moments when the statesman was sunk in the social acquaintance; and this is the most valuable species of testimony; for it sometimes happens that a nearer view of public men diminishes much of that wonder we feel at a distance. On the contrary, it appears that intimacy with Mr. Burke increased it. His more private friends, who happened to be little or not at all connected with public affairs, and who had the best possible opportunities of probing and exploring the man, loved him the best, and prized him the most. The same feeling existed among his relations. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet-de-chambre, and from the same feeling of familiarity, few men, perhaps, however great in the estimation of the world, carry the impressions of greatness into the bosoms of their own families. But even here, where most unveiled and unreserved, he had the fortune to secure both profound attachment and respect; and the following anecdote proves that he contrived to belie the

who fell the victim of rapid and unexpected decline. He expired on Monday, Feb. 27, 1809, in the vigour of his days, and the maturity of his talents.

“Distinguished as a civilian, a political philosopher, a poet, and a senator, his death must, without partiality to him individually, be considered as a public bereavement. By the operation of a vigorous intellect, combined with persevering application, Dr. Lawrence soon rose into high professional estimation. He became at length, politically known by the active part which he took, during 1784, in favour of Mr Fox’s memorably contested election for Westminster. His career in the senate was highly respectable. His sentiments, which he not unfrequently delivered in the House of Commons, were the result of deep thought, couched in striking and nervous language, and were always respectfully received. If he seldom attempted to enliven legislative discussions with the scintillations of wit, it was because he felt the gravity of the senatorial character to be utterly incompatible with ostentatious displays of this kind.

“Estimated as a poet and wit, however, the *Rolliad* and *Probationary Odes*, of which the preface and notes to the former were chiefly from his pen, have established his reputation beyond the chances of mutability. He was likewise the writer of several election ballads, which reflect credit on his genius, and of various little poems, inserted in the poetical register, which sufficiently evince the extent and versatility of his talents.

“As one of the executors of the late Edmund Burke, it became the province of Dr. Lawrence, in discharge of the trust so reposed in him, to superintend the posthumous publications, together with the other literary property, of his illustrious friend. Amongst these works, the conducting of the original *Annual Register*, in the composition of which Dr. Lawrence had long assisted, came, on the death of Mr. Burke, entirely under his direction. Of the volumes immediately subsequent, the prefaces, and some parts of the *History of Europe*, were written by Dr. Lawrence. It is greatly to be regretted, that his other avocations, multifarious and embarrassing, prevented him from extending his credit as an author.

“Endeared to his friends by his virtues, valued by the public for his writings, and esteemed by his compatriots as a senator, he is exempted from the common oblivion of men; as one whose talents and whose virtues will linger some time longer in recollection. Considered with reference to his political views and feelings, Dr. Lawrence was one of those who seem to have been happily removed from those public evils which are evidently impending. He partook of nobler views, and lived in better times. He was one of the last great men of the old school!”

proverb just quoted. When some one was congratulating his old servant Webster on the honour of serving so good a master and so great a man—"Yes, Sir," said the faithful attendant, "he is a great man; he knows and does every thing but what is mean or little." Mr. Windham used to say that this was one of the finest panegyrics upon him which could be uttered.

Richard his brother, and William Burke, themselves able men, his companions from youth, the partakers of his fortunes, the participators in many of his studies, who knew, if any men could know, the value of his mind, and the labours bestowed upon its culture, looked up to him with a feeling of veneration. Sentiments of this kind frequently appear in the letters of both. At an early period of his public life, Richard, writing to a friend in Ireland, thus concludes an eulogium upon him—"Whatever he has is his own; he owes the public nothing, whatever the public may owe to him. It is but just to his character to say that for honour, for integrity, and for ability, no man ever stood higher in public estimation in this kingdom; and I will add, but it is to you that I write, no man ever better deserved it." William Burke, writing about the same time, speaks the same language. Though no relation of Edmund, this gentleman was so much attached to him from boyhood, and so proud of the connexion, that, in the language of a friend of the family, "he would have knocked any man down who had dared to dispute the relationship."

The respectful admiration of his son equalled that of his brother and friend. During the last visit to Ireland in 1786, when Mr. Shackleton, after listening attentively to some ingenious and profound observations of his father, turned aside soon afterwards with his son, and remarked in conversation, "he is the greatest man of the age:" "He is," replied the son, with filial enthusiasm, and a very near approximation to the truth, "the greatest man of any age." Dr. Parr, we have seen, was of the same opinion. Lord Thurlow's estimate of him has just been given. Dr. Lawrence's sentiments are on record; while a few living, and a host of dead friends, concurred in the same tone of admiration.

Nothing perhaps more strongly exhibits the homage paid to his vigour of mind than the influence it gave him over the most eminent men with whom political connexion brought him into close contact: over the Marquis of Rockingham, a man of sound talents unquestionably; over Mr. Dowdeswell, and all the ablest of that party; over the Duke of Portland; over Mr. Fox; over Mr. Windham; over all his private friends without exception; over the most distinguished of the old Whig party now living; over several of the coalition Ministry; in a considerable degree over Mr. Pitt and his colleagues, in 1792, at least as much as the habitual pride, and jealousy of all political talents entertained by the minister would permit; and, on nearly all the great



questions he embraced, eventually over the whole nation. If it require a strong understanding to gain a leading influence over even the ignorant and the weak, what must that be which subjects to its dominion the enlightened, and the powerful, and in talents not merely the great but the vast?

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## CHAPTER XVII.

His eloquence—His writings—His leading principles as a Statesman—Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox.

OF the conception which we have been taught to entertain of what a great and commanding orator should be; whose moral character, as the ancients endeavour to impress upon us, ought to be pure; whose knowledge must be universal; whose genius serves to animate and adorn his knowledge; whose language flows at will; whose delivery is required to be impressive; whose powers of reasoning and imagination are equally strong; whose presence of mind rarely deserts him; whose readiness to combine all these qualities, or to draw upon each separately, as circumstances may require, is unlimited—there is no man, perhaps, in the history of English oratory, who comes near to Mr. Burke. It has been remarked with some truth, that his powers, if shared out, would have made half-a-dozen of good orators. It must at least be regarded as an uncommon coincidence that he should unite in an eminent degree nearly every one of the requisites which the critics of the classic days of Rome point out as necessary to the character. Others of the great political names of our country possess only two or three of the qualities here enumerated. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, for instance, equalled him in vigour of reasoning, in judgment, and in fluency; Mr. Sheridan in coolness, promptitude, and wit; Lord Chatham had the advantage in a bold, and indeed overpowering delivery, and perhaps, Lord Bolingbroke also in some degree; Charles Townshend in a peculiar parliamentary skill in seizing the favourable moment to push a subject, and in the adaptation of his powers to the point at issue, as well as to the present temper of the House, whatever temper that might be; but none of them possessed the combination peculiar to Mr. Burke. Neither had any of these eminent persons his originality of thought, his force of language, his striking phraseology, or that inexhaustible fertility upon every topic which constitutes the soul of eloquence, and which, when his opponents had little else to find fault with, they urged against

him as a defect. He would seem therefore to have been cut out for a great orator, partly by some natural gifts, and partly by having grounded and reared himself upon the model which the Augustan age of literature recommends. And this must have been done at an early period of life; led to it probably not so much from any sanguine expectation of ever becoming the character which he admired, as by the expected duties of the profession he at first contemplated, or by that latent instinct which, without knowing precisely whither it tends, so often propels and guides in the pursuits of life.

A distinction may be made, and perhaps hold good, between a great orator and a debater. It has been said, that in the latter respect Mr. Fox acquired the superiority over all men. No speaker certainly was ever heard with more consideration by those opposed to him, or perhaps with so much partiality by those whom he led in the House of Commons, as well from his unquestioned talents and popularity, as from the strong attachment of the latter to his person, which scarcely any other political leader has had the good fortune to secure, or to secure in the same degree. It will, nevertheless, be difficult to point out where Mr. Burke's presumed inferiority lay. In information, in wisdom upon all great occasions, and in variety of talents to secure them a favorable reception from his hearers, he had no equal; in readiness and vigour no superior; and he was accused of being frequent and fertile to a fault.

After all, however, it may be doubted whether this great reputed dexterity in debate of Mr. Fox, be any just criterion of the highest order of intellect, or whether his style which commonly accompanied it was of the highest style of oratory—that style which is not merely effective in the British Senate, but which commands the admiration of all men, of all countries, as the perfection of the art. Judged by this standard he comes much short of Mr. Burke. A good debater, although a character almost wholly English, as there was scarcely any such (their speeches being chiefly written) among the ancients, and little resembling him in the rest of Europe at the present day, is more of a mechanic, perhaps, than he is willing to acknowledge. His range is commonly narrowed, his aim bounded by local or temporary circumstances, which, though calculated to meet some petty interest or emergency of the moment, often become an obstacle to a very wide expansion of mind; he may be said to move within a moral circle, to work in a species of political tread-mill; and his art has been attained, as in the cases of Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, and others, and it is but fair to calculate, may be again acquired, at an age when other and much higher faculties remain still unfolded. A good debater, therefore, may in a great measure be made. The power of a great and commanding orator,

in the highest acceptation of the term, must, like that of the poet, be chiefly born with him.\*

The oratorical style of Mr. Burke is not only of the very highest order, but it possesses the first characteristic of genius—originality. We have nothing that is very similar to it, and little, perhaps, equal to it, in our language, though of its nature and power, its vigour and variety, its novelty of thought, and intellectual brilliancy which flashes athwart every subject, and transmutes all objects that it meets with into auxiliaries to his main purpose, a very inadequate idea can be conveyed by description, and no specimen can do it justice. When Johnson was asked whether Mr. Burke resembled Tullius Cicero? “No, Sir,” was the reply, “he resembles Edmund Burke.” Taken as a whole, however, his manner partakes of the grandeur of the eloquent Roman, with more of richness, of knowledge, of masculine energy, and altogether a greater reach of mind than he displays; though with less of chastity, of elaborate elegance, or of methodical arrangement, which, however, we have no right to expect in speeches which, unlike those of the great ancient, were not polished into perfection before they were spoken. In detached passages he sometimes assumes an air of severity, and of that simpler dignity which belongs to Demosthenes, to whom, as an orator, he himself gave the preference.†

His eloquence will be found less remarkable for the predominance of any one faculty of the mind, than for that distinguishing feature already alluded to—a combination of them all; a peculiarity which has so much confused the judgment of many, and not

\* Since the second edition of this work was in the press, the opinion of a great genius, recently given to the world, seems to corroborate that of the present writer.

Lord Byron has observed, that no parliamentary speaker of our own day gave him the idea of a great orator. Grattan, he said, was near to it. Fox he only regarded as a debater, and between such a character and a great orator there is no more resemblance, he adds, than between an *improvisatore*, or a versifier, and a great poet. Lord Chatham and Burke were, in his opinion, the only English orators who approached perfection. If the contest for superiority lies between these two great men, it will be no difficult matter, perhaps, to decide to whom the preference will be ultimately given.

† A writer, already quoted, says of him—“Equal to that great man (Cicero) in dialectic, in imagery, in occasional splendour, and in general information;—excelling him in political wisdom, and the application of history and philosophy to politics (*there is little doubt but that he also excelled him in the preceding points in which he is only rated as equal*)—he yields to him in pathos, in grace, in taste, and even in that which was not the forte of Cicero, in discretion. \* \* \* \* \*

What particularly distinguishes him from the Greek and Roman orators, and from his contemporary rivals, were the countless lessons of civil and moral wisdom by which he dignified his compositions, and both enforced and illustrated his arguments; his sudden transitions from the grand to the gay, from sublimity to pleasantries, from the refined and recondite to the ordinary and obvious; and his frequent admixture of coarse and low expressions even in his most splendid passages. The effect of those was sometimes great, but they deformed and disgusted. ‘The Venus of Phidias,’ Wilkes used to say, ‘was so lovely, that the Athenians called her the Venus of Roses; lovely, too, speaking generally, is the Venus of Burke; but she sometimes is the Venus of whisky.’”



mean critics, as to give rise to the most contradictory opinions. Some represent him as addressing the passions and imagination more than the understanding; others of overwhelming his subject by pouring in argument much more than enough; some of dealing in that bold, flowing, loose, yet powerful style which they term licentious; others of being often abrupt and severe; some for indulging in too much wit, and ornament, and lighter matter; others for being too metaphysical and refined, and too much above the intellectual level of the assembly he addressed, though that assembly was the House of Commons. Such seems to have been in some measure the opinion of Goldsmith, who describes him as being doomed (in allusion also to the fatigue and privations of debate)—“To eat mutton cold, and cut *blocks* with a razor.” Some again have honestly confessed, that after much meditation they can make nothing at all of him—that his qualities contradict each other, and that his powers and his mode of wielding them are equally indescribable.

All these opinions, it is clear, cannot be true; and the confusion perhaps arises from each viewing him in the light which strikes strongest at the moment; from attending not so much to the conjoined effect of the whole of his argument, as to single parts, each of which indeed is so striking in itself, as to appear principal in the cause in which it is embodied only as an auxiliary. Examine any single oration he has published; that on American Taxation for instance, the first, though perhaps not the best that he gave to the world; and the pervading feeling in the mind of the reader after perusal, is a conviction of sound, straight-forward sense, enlargement of mind, ingenious, and yet solid and honest views, moderation of tone, and acute, discriminating wisdom in the speaker. Let him omit the graphic sketches of character, if these should be deemed extraneous or meretricious, and there is little to offend even a fastidious taste; nothing whatever which can be considered flowery (an accusation sometimes laid to Mr. Burke's charge by a strange confusion of language, though there is not even an approach to such a quality in any one of his speeches or writings); nothing merely amusing or ornamental; nothing which the plainest understanding may not instantly comprehend; nothing which merely solicits the imagination for a figure, without that figure strikes hard and home in some form or other upon the argument; but a total of vigour and effect on this, as on any question which much engaged his attention, that no other modern orator imparts, and which the records of Parliament teach us no other could have imparted. His great aim, as to manner, in this, as in all his public speeches and his writings, is strength. To this he often sacrifices the minor consideration of elegance or beauty of phrase, which were reserved chiefly for his private communications. He approaches to a contest, therefore, not with two or three, but with that variety of qualities which may

be compared to a whole armory of weapons; and the skill with which they were used, and the consequent difficulty experienced by the ablest opponents in meeting him fully on every point of attack, made him at all times a most formidable assailant in Parliament—a kind of Briareus among political disputants.

To arrive at this result his mind possessed a peculiarly discursive faculty; like a bird of prey upon the wing, it was ever on the watch for something on which to levy contributions. Few things, therefore, whether great or little, whether of nature or of art, whether belonging to earth or to a higher region, escape him; he darts upon them without materially impeding his course, or has the rarer art, in most of his deviations, to carry his subject along with him. He seldom indeed stops to select; he grasps at much which a severer judgment would reject; but whatever he seizes he has the art beyond any other man of putting to use, and his progress often reminds us of a torrent, sweeping rock and tree and earth along with it, yet acquiring additional power even from the heterogeneous nature of its accumulations. In these, generally speaking, there is very little of common-place; or when a common idea is used, it is dressed in so novel and attractive a garb, that we are sometimes at a loss to recognize an old acquaintance. His conceptions, without violent straining, are almost always original. We meet with things in him which are to be found in no other quarter, which are wholly unexpected in themselves, and which perhaps scarcely any one ever before imagined, or at least thought of conjoining and adapting to such purposes as he had in view. He has drilled more extraordinary and bold auxiliaries to the art of persuasion than any other orator, ancient or modern; and while their novelty creates surprise, we are often at a loss to discover not only how they get into their new situation, but by what dexterity of mental magic they are made to play so conspicuous a part.

At times he seems on the verge of extravagance, not indeed that species of it which excites laughter or contempt, but rather astonishment. Along this dangerous precipice, dangerous in many respects to an ambitious orator or writer, he treads in perfect security, while other and even eminent men, in attempting to pursue his track, have not been able to preserve themselves from falling into absurdity, chiefly because they mistake the severe boldness of his occasionally figurative manner for a flowery manner, than which no two things can be more opposite; the former being the offspring of stronger, the latter in general, of looser and weaker intellectual powers. Nothing indeed is more peculiar to his impassioned style than this difficulty of imitation. To be convinced of it, let any one take a page or two of any of our English classics, Addison or Johnson for instance, and aim at hitting off their chief characteristics, and he may probably make the resemblance respectable; let him again attempt those of Burke, and he will almost certainly fail; he will either overdo or underdo it. Even Mr. Sheridan, with all his genius, who had his



eye upon this great model in the early part of his career and in several of his speeches on the impeachment, soon found out that the endeavour was almost hopeless, and therefore prudently gave it up.\* It is remarkable that Mr. Burke himself more than once experienced that his excellencies were, or were represented to be, defects, and that the very number of his talents served as a handle to impair the effect he expected to produce; for there is a large class of auditors to be found in the House of Commons, as elsewhere, who think that an argument to be good must be dull, that wit in the course of it is misapplied, and that a flash of genius is a kind of sudden death to the whole process of reasoning—an idea to which even Mr. Pitt, with characteristic dexterity was fond of giving countenance, when he had nothing better at hand to offer

\* Since the first edition of this memoir was published, a work already alluded to (The Life of Sheridan) has appeared, which incidentally corroborates or follows nearly every one of the views the present writer has taken of Burke, in the points in which he differed from, and excelled, his great contemporaries.—

“His (Sheridan’s) attempts, indeed, at the florid, or figurative style, whether in his speeches or his writings, were seldom very successful. That luxuriance of fancy which in Burke was natural and indigenious, was in him rather a forced and exotic growth. It is a remarkable proof of the difference between them, that while, in the memorandums of speeches left behind by Burke, we find that the points of argument or business were those which he prepared, trusting to the ever-ready wardrobe of his fancy for their adornment,—in Mr. Sheridan’s notes it is chiefly the decorative passages that are worked up beforehand to their full polish; while on the resources of his good sense, ingenuity, and temper, he seems to have relied for the management of his reasonings and facts. Hence naturally it arises, that the images of Burke being called up on the instant, like spirits, to perform the bidding of his argument, minister to it throughout with an almost co-ordinate agency; while the figurative fancies of Sheridan, already prepared for the occasion, and brought forth to adorn, not assist the business of the discourse, resemble rather those sprites which the magicians used to keep enclosed in phials, to be produced for a momentary enchantment, and then shut up again,

“In truth, the similes and illustrations of Burke form such an intimate, and often essential part of his reasoning, that if the whole strength of the Samson does not lie in those luxuriant locks, it would at least be considerably diminished by their loss, whereas, in the speech of Mr. Sheridan (on the Begum charge) there is hardly one of the rhetorical ornaments that might not be detached without in any degree injuring the force of the general statement.

“Another consequence of this difference between them is observable in their respective modes of transition from what may be called the *business* of a speech to its more generalized and rhetorical parts. When Sheridan rises, his elevation is not sufficiently prepared; he starts abruptly and at once from the level of his statement, and sinks down into it again with the same suddenness. But Burke, whose imagination never allows even business to subside into mere prose, sustains a pitch throughout which accustoms the mind to wonder, and while it prepares us to accompany him in his boldest flights, makes us, even when he walks, still feel that he has wings:—

*‘Même quand l’oiseau marche, on sent qu’il a des ailes.’*

“It is surely a most unjust disparagement of the eloquence of Burke, to apply to it any time of his life, the epithet ‘flowery’—a designation only applicable to that ordinary ambition of style, whose chief display by necessity consists of ornament without thought, and pomp without substance. A succession of bright images, clothed in simple transparent language, even when, as in Burke, they ‘crowd upon the aching sense’ too dazzlingly, should never be confounded with that mere verbal opulence of style, which mistakes the glare of words for the glitter of ideas, and like the Helen of the sculptor Lysippus, makes finery supply the place of beauty.”



to the hard-pushing, and keen, and various powers of his gifted adversary.

It may be true, that in performing the frequent duty of an Opposition leader—that of making an eloquent speech out of little or nothing—he sometimes, on lighter matter at least, delighted to play with his subject; to wanton in the luxuriance of his imagination, wit, and sarcasm; to dally and amuse himself as well as others on the dull road it was so often his lot to travel, by giving a kind of jubilee to his animal spirits. But his power over the main question was as visible on these as on more serious occasions; it was often termed the “wantonness of eloquence,” and might be called the consciousness of mental power; he reminds us of a horse-soldier in an engagement, exercising preliminary sabre-flourishes over the head of a defenceless enemy on foot, previous to putting him to death. It would be hazardous to pronounce these or any other of his deviations misplaced, for some of the most skilful passages in oratory are those which occasionally glance from the main point to prepare attention for what is to follow. Homer is said to nod, and Burke may occasionally trifle, but both are probably the effects of design. Few subjects admit of continued excitement of mind for a length of time, and few audiences relish for three or four hours together what is called a continued chain of reasoning. Rests are as useful and necessary in a long speech as in a long journey, and their judicious intermixture, as they occasion the least fatigue, are likely to impart the greater pleasure. “To have attained a relish for his (Mr. Burke’s) charms,” says an eminent critic, “is greatly to have advanced in literature.”

Certain peculiarities in his eloquence, such as the strength of imagination, the vehemence, the force of invective, the almost morbid acuteness of feeling (which nevertheless is one of the requisites to an orator to make his hearers also feel), belong as much perhaps to his country as to the individual. Several of the orators of Ireland exhibit something of the same spirit in the few specimens preserved of their most animated contentions. English Parliamentary oratory, so far as it is preserved, has little of this character. But the specimens of older date are so few and imperfect as to make it difficult to judge, for very little exists previous to the commencement of the late reign, which gives us any tolerable idea of the speeches, or style of speaking, of the great names in our political annals. Even the supposed early effusions of Lord Chatham are well known to derive their chief merit from the pen of Dr. Johnson, who rarely, if at all, heard him speak at that time, and who wrote his and the other speeches given to us as parliamentary debates, sometimes from a few meagre hints, frequently from none at all, simply from knowing which side of the argument the speakers had taken. Statesmen then contended as if their eloquence was only born to die with the debate of the day; to become for ever extinguished and forgotten in the very spot which gave it birth,

leaving to posterity no memorial of their noblest stand against an unconstitutional measure or Minister, but the record of the rejection of the one, or the dismissal from office of the other. It is also true what Mr. Burke somewhere observes, that debates a century ago were comparative parish-vestry discussions to what they afterwards became. This change, according to the general belief of his contemporaries, was chiefly owing to himself. He is considered, by the enlarged views, the detailed expositions of policy, the intermixture of permanent truths bearing upon temporary facts, and the general lustre and air of wisdom which he was the first to introduce at large into Parliamentary discussion, greatly to have exalted the character of Parliament itself; and by the display of his own characteristics, to have excited the emulation of others. No comparison at least can be drawn between the tone and value of Parliamentary eloquence previous to his appearance there, and since.

As an accuser, his power was truly terrific; he has exhausted the whole compass of the English language in the fierceness of his invective and the bitterness of his censure; for even Junius, with all the advantages of indiscriminate personality, private scandal, and the mask under which he fought, has not exceeded him in severity, while he falls infinitely short of him in reach of thought, command of language, energy of expression, and variety of reproach. Junius is more pungent in his assaults, Mr. Burke more powerful; Junius imparts the idea of keenness, Mr. Burke of force; Junius of possessing powers to a certain degree circumscribed, Mr. Burke of a magnitude nearly boundless; Junius hews down his victim with a double-edged sabre, Mr. Burke fells him with a sledge-hammer, and repeats his blow so often, and in so many different modes, that few can again recognize the carcass he has once taken it in hand to mangle.

Much of this wrathful spirit arose from what he thought tyranny or crime, or where great public offences or great supposed culprits were in question, and when he conceived himself bound to summon up every faculty he possessed not merely to overpower but to destroy them. In reply to the attack of the Duke of Bedford, though he curbs much of his natural vehemence from the provocation being personal to himself, there is great vigour, with something of a lofty contempt of his opponent. But few, if any, records of exertions by one man equal in vehemence of censure or variety of reproach, in labour or in talents, those against the French Revolution and Mr. Hastings. Against the latter his speeches were heard with an awe approaching to terror; and though by some their severity has been censured, the best apologies, to which little perhaps can be added, were volunteered at the moment by two political adversaries, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wilberforce;\* but it must

\* The latter, in an animated address, said, he did not wonder at the mind of Mr. Burke being warmed, and his feelings excited, by the nature of the supposed crimes

be remembered that he solemnly denied having used any of the more offensive expressions and phrases which were put into his mouth by the idle or designing rumours of the day.

In the more mechanical part of oratory—delivery, his manner was usually bold, less graceful than powerful, his enunciation vehement and unchecked by any embarrassment, his periods flowing and harmonious, his language always forcible, sometimes choice, but, when strongly excited by the subject, acrimonious or sarcastic, his epithets numerous, and occasionally strong or coarse, his invective furious, and sometimes overpowering, and to the last he retained much of the Irish accent, which, in the opinion of many, materially marred the power of his eloquence. At times his gesticulation was violent, his tone harsh, and an habitual, undulating motion of the head (which is alluded to in the lines before quoted from Simkin's Letters) had the appearance of indicating something of a self-confident or intractable spirit; he seemed as if he would command fully as much as he would persuade, the auditors of the opposite benches, and the effect proved occasionally disadvantageous to his views.

His speeches, though always abounding in instructive and ingenious matter, were sometimes, like those of Mr. Fox, too long, both orators sinning in this respect from a fulness of mind which, having once begun to disburden itself, appeared inexhaustible. Three hours from each being a common effort, left nothing for any one else on the same side to say. Some Members expressed discontent at being thus thrown into the shade, particularly those of Opposition after the quarrel on the French Revolution, when one of the principal is said to have complained of Mr. Burke being too much of a monopolist in this way, though he admitted him to be "undoubtedly the best informed man in either House of Parliament, the most eloquent man, and frequently the wittiest man." The three great orators of the age sinned in this way nearly alike. A modern writer of merit says, "Both orators (Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt) were verbose—the former by his repetitions—the latter by his amplifications." To this it may be added, that Mr. Burke's fault was fulness—a profusion of illustrative matter—mostly original, commonly powerful, always various—but even variety will not at all times compensate for length. This fault is more venial

of the accused; for he was aware of the transactions in India before almost any one else; he had been brooding over them for years; and it was natural for him to see their enormity in a magnified point of view. Mr. Pitt (9th May, 1787,) "admitted that he was once of opinion that the language of those who chiefly promoted the present proceeding was too full of acerbity, and much too passionate and exaggerated; but when he found what the nature of the crimes alleged was, and how strong the presumption that the allegations were true, he confessed that he could not expect that gentlemen, when reciting what they thought actions of treachery, actions of violence and oppression, and demanding an investigation into those actions, should speak a language different from that which would naturally arise from the contemplation of such actions."



however than that of either of his contemporaries in *repetitions* or *amplifications*. There are moments indeed when the best speakers, especially out of power, cannot obtain an attentive hearing from hungry and impatient auditors; a debater must often wait for the *mollissima tempora fandi*; and the great subject of this sketch himself particularly commends Charles Townshend's skill in this respect, as "hitting the house between wind and water."

A description of the manner as well as of the power of Mr. Burke in debate, by the Duke de Levis, is interesting as coming from a foreigner; the remarks on his dress will be thought not a little characteristic of a Frenchman's constitutional attachment to show and effect, in opposition to English plainness and simplicity. The occasion was a debate on the French Revolution:—

"The man whom I had the greatest desire to hear was the celebrated Mr. Burke, author of the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, and often himself sublime. At length he rose, but in beholding him I could scarcely recover from my surprise. I had so frequently heard his eloquence compared to that of Demosthenes and Cicero, that my imagination, associating him with those great names, had represented him to me in a noble and imposing garb. I certainly did not expect to find him in the British Parliament dressed in the ancient toga; nor was I prepared to see him in a tight brown coat, which seemed to impede every movement, and, above all, the little bob-wig with curls. \* \* \* In the mean time he moved into the middle of the House, contrary to the usual practice, for the members speak standing and uncovered, not leaving their places. But Mr. Burke, with the most natural air imaginable, with seeming humility, and with folded arms, began his speech in so low a tone of voice that I could scarcely hear him. Soon after, however, becoming animated by degrees, he described religion attacked, the bonds of subordination broken, civil society threatened to its foundations; and in order to show that England could depend only upon herself, he pictured in glowing colours the political state of Europe; the spirit of ambition and folly which pervaded the greater part of her governments; the culpable apathy of some, the weakness of all. When in the course of this grand sketch he mentioned Spain, that immense monarchy, which appeared to have fallen into a total lethargy, 'What can we expect,' said he, 'from her?—mighty indeed, but unwieldy—vast in bulk, but inert in spirit—a whale stranded upon the sea-shore of Europe.' The whole house was silent; all eyes were upon him, and this silence was interrupted only by the loud cries of hear! hear! a kind of accompaniment which the friends of the speaking Member adopt in order to direct attention to the most brilliant passages of his speech. But these cheerings were superfluous on the present occasion; every mind was fixed; the sentiments he expressed spread themselves with rapidity; every one shared his emotion, whether he represented the ministers of religion proscribed, inhu-

manly persecuted and banished, imploring the Almighty in a foreign land to forgive their ungrateful country; or when he depicted in the most affecting manner the misfortunes of the Royal Family, and the humiliation of the daughter of the Cæsars. Every eye was bathed in tears at the recital of these sad calamities supported with such heroic fortitude. Mr. Burke then, by an easy transition, passed on to the exposition of those absurd attempts of inexperienced men to establish a chimerical liberty; nor did he spare the petulant vanity of upstarts in their pretended love for equality. The truth of these striking and animated pictures made the whole House pass in an instant from the tenderest emotions of feeling to bursts of laughter; never was the electric power of eloquence more imperiously felt; this extraordinary man seemed to raise and quell the passions of his auditors with as much ease, and as rapidly, as a skilful musician passes into the various modulations of his harpsichord. I have witnessed many, too many political assemblages and striking scenes where eloquence performed a noble part, but the whole of them appear insipid when compared with this amazing effort.\*

\* Tastes proverbially differ. Having therefore heard a foreigner upon the manner of Burke, let us attend to a rival orator of our own country, who must, however, be listened to in this matter by the reader with many grains of allowance. The anecdote appears in a note to the life of Dr. E. D. Clarke, the traveller, from a memorandum kept by him.

“Monday, July 5, 1819.—While we were waiting at Trinity Lodge for the deputation from the Senate to conduct the Chancellor, I had a conversation with Lord Erskine upon the qualifications of Burke as an orator. Lord Erskine said that his defect was *episode*. ‘A public speaker,’ said he, ‘should never be *episodical*—it is a very great mistake. I hold it to be a rule respecting public speaking, which ought never to be violated, that the speaker should not introduce into his oratory insular brilliant passages—they always tend to call off the minds of his hearers, and to make them wander from what ought to be the main business of his speech. If he wish to introduce brilliant passages, *they should run along the line of his subject matter*, and never quit it. Burke’s episodes were highly beautiful—I know nothing *more* beautiful, but they were his defects in speaking.’ Then he introduced one of his most beautiful *episodes*, taken from a speech on the American war; and repeated by heart the whole of that part of the speech in which he introduces the quotation ‘Acta Parentum,’ &c. ‘all this,’ said he, ‘is very beautiful, but it ought to be avoided. Now I will give you another specimen from his speeches on the same war, in which his oratory is *perfect*—where the most common, familiar, and even low technical expressions are made to blend themselves with the finest passages; and where having full possession of the minds of his hearers, he never lets them go from him for an instant.’ Then he repeated all that speech.

“Lord Erskine also told me that Burke’s manner was *sometimes* bad—‘*it was like that of an Irish chairman.*’ ‘Once,’ said he, ‘I was so tired of hearing him in a debate upon the India bill, that not liking he should see me leave the House of Commons while he was speaking, I crept along under the benches and got out, and went to the Isle of Wight. Afterwards that very speech of his was published, and I found it to be so extremely beautiful *that I actually wore it into pieces by reading it.*’”

Upon this piece of conversational criticism, if correctly reported by Dr. Clarke, a few words may not be misplaced.

The *tone* of it belongs to that vague and careless common-place rattle in which Lord Erskine frequently indulged, without much considering the precise import of his words. The *place* was somewhat odd; for as Burke, Dr. Johnson has told us, was great even when encountered casually under a *gate-way*, so, Lord Erskine, who it is well known had this great example frequently in his eye, thought he could not



Considerable difference of manner may be observed in his speeches and writings, the former having a more rapid, vehement, freedom of style, throwing off shorter and less finished, though not less spirited sketches than the latter; there is likewise more aim at effect, the sentences shorter and more epigrammatic, and the subject on the whole more condensed. A belief prevailed for a short time in the early part of his career of their being written previous to delivery—an impression arising from their admitted superiority over those of his contemporaries; but this was not the case. He meditated deeply, and was sometimes heard to express his thoughts aloud. On new, or very important questions, he committed some of the chief heads of his argument to paper, but for the language in which it was conveyed, the colouring, illustration, and the whole artillery of that forcible diction and figurative boldness in which he has not merely no equal, but no competitor, he trusted to a well-stored mind, a retentive memory, and a readiness which, from constant discipline in the school of debate, never failed him.

As to his published speeches we have the authority of Gibbon who heard them, as well as of still more intimate friends, for the truth of the fact that they received no embellishments in passing

do less than attempt something worth recording when conversing in an anticipated interview with a Professor in a University *lodge*. The *time* was peculiar, for it was at a period when his lordship was said to have outlived not only his reputation, but his faculties. The *subject* likewise is worthy of notice; for these orations, though certainly not more perfect than any other human productions, he had three years before at Edinburgh pronounced to be immortal and inimitable, and in his own oratory had occasionally attempted to imitate their style; but having, like Sheridan, failed in the design, had, like him also, soon given it up; besides, he has himself told us, that “he had transcribed with his own hand all the most admirable passages in the writings and speeches of this most extraordinary man.”

His general remarks on episode (though these were not original, but borrowed from a contemporary journal of criticism) may, or may not be true; they prove nothing; for such things depend upon times, circumstances, and situations, to which general rules do not apply. Some of the finest things to be met with in oratory are in their nature episodical. Whether Burke's episodes be improperly introduced is a question to be decided by taste, and a consideration of circumstances, rather than by an abstract critical dogma. In the speech on American taxation, for instance, the characters drawn of Charles Townshend, George Grenville, and Lord Chatham, may, by many readers, be deemed too much in the nature of episode; yet, independent of their beauty, they are not without much of that very test of propriety which Lord Erskine expressly specifies, namely, *running along the line of his subject*. So of his deviations in other speeches from the direct line of march of his argument.

The observation of his lordship as to Burke's manner\* being like that of ‘an Irish chairman’ is an extravagant exaggeration; and the story of *creeping along under the benches* (if taken literally) must be a positive untruth, for such a thing was not practicable. The whole conversation bears traces of that loose juvenility of manner to which he was prone, but to which no great weight can be attached from the terms in which it is given. Burke, on the floor of the House of Commons, was, as has been already said in this work, sometimes unduly positive—sometimes dictatorial in his mode of address; but vulgarity was as wholly foreign to his manner, either in public or private, as to his mind.

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\* Of Lord Erskine's own manner Lord Byron sarcastically observed, that “it was true he had never heard him at the bar, but after hearing him in the House he had no further wish to hear him any where.”



through the press. It is well known indeed that the fragments preserved of several of them were written down *after* and not *before* delivery, assisted by the notes and recollection of different Members, his friends, and not unfrequently of the public reporters.

A dictum of Mr. Fox has been lately ushered into the world, which, if truly stated, must be considered either as very unsound criticism, or as showing a strong leaning to his own style of oratory, which was certainly deficient in the point he is made to undervalue. It is represented, that when a speech was praised in his presence, he usually inquired whether it read well? and if answered in the affirmative, replied 'then it was a bad speech.' No satisfactory reason perhaps can be assigned for such a curious, perhaps extravagant, opinion, which, if countenanced by a shadow of truth, in a few instances in our own day, is at variance with the whole experience of the ancient, and much of the greater part of the modern world; for if it were correct, it must follow that the speeches of Demosthenes and Cicero were *bad* speeches; and this will scarcely be maintained. The origin of this critical heterodoxy, if it were ever seriously entertained, was perhaps some slight feeling of jealousy in the mind of the eminent man in question, of the daily increasing celebrity of Burke's speeches, while his own, he might conceive, containing fewer of the same materials for immortality which characterised those of his old friend and master, and when no longer supported by the influence of his personal popularity or party attachments, might either remain stationary, or possibly retrograde in opinion.

A writer of consideration,\* however, seems to insinuate that the speeches actually delivered in Parliament differed from those that issued from the press. This is a misrepresentation; unintentional no doubt, though not unexpected from a Foxite, who must always be excused where the credit of his principal is in question, and he admits that there is nothing in Fox or Pitt, or indeed in any other orator up to Cicero, to be compared in any degree with the published speeches of Burke. If there be in reality, as he states, any difference between the speeches uttered and the speeches printed, it must be remembered that he *himself* published no speech after that on the Nabob of Arcot's debts in 1785, except an abstract of that on the army estimates in 1790; and therefore is not responsible for any variations there may be in the reports given of them from what he actually delivered. Up to the period in question, or nearly so, Gibbon, who was opposed to him in politics, had to listen to him night after night, assailing not only the Ministry generally, but more especially the very office (that of a Lord of Trade) which he held, and who therefore, it may be presumed, looked pretty sharply to what he said. The historian

\* Mr. Charles Butler—Reminiscences, p. 166.

gives us his testimony expressly as is here stated. He is therefore directly opposed to the writer in question; and of his superior means of judging, from being a Member of the House and a constant attendant upon it, there can be no dispute.—But it should ever be borne in mind by the reader, that no man who considers Mr. Fox's line of politics in 1793 prudent or wise, or who thinks that the French revolutionary war was unnecessary, or could have been avoided, ought ever to trust himself with speaking of Mr. Burke. There is a fog over his mental vision which distorts every object in that line of view which he looks at.

#### HIS WRITINGS.

Next to the thirst for oratorical renown, perhaps quite equal to it in degree, Mr. Burke aimed at acquiring weight and celebrity by his pen; seeming to think that fame in the senate never reached its highest value until stamped by the approving seal of the press. Avaricious, as it appears, of excellence, he grasped at superiority in both modes of distinction, desirous to show the world that though in a series of 2000 years (with the single exception of Lord Bolingbroke, if he can be deemed an exception) one of them had been found sufficient for the faculties of any one man, he at least possessed the ability to write with, if possible, still more power than he could speak. Of this sort of distinction he judged, and judged truly, that no superior party influence, no mere personal attachments, no jealousy, no misrepresentation either by Whig or Tory, no weight of purse, no family connexion however high could deprive him; for the world at large is a tolerably impartial tribunal.

Yet as men have an obvious aversion to the union of excellencies in any one person, the moment he was pronounced the greatest writer of the age—a verdict which none even of his adversaries has withheld—some attempts were made to question, what was never questioned before that time, his power in the House of Commons; exemplifying the remark of Dr. Parr when speaking of him; “There is an unwillingness in the world to admit that the same man has excelled in various pursuits; yet Burke's compositions, diversified as they are in their nature, though each excelling in its kind, who does not read with instruction and delight?” When this was written it must be remembered the French Revolution had not taken place, and consequently half his strength remained still unknown. That event drew it forth with indescribable effect. He had to contend with much of the political and by far the greater part of the literary strength of the country, at least that portion of it which was seen most frequently in the press, without a single second of even moderate talents in the literary class, to assist him, yet he overpowered them all. His arm was indeed so irresistible as to give countenance to the

general opinion that no allies\* were necessary to one who was in himself an army; for aid would be more likely to enfeeble than to support him—and the advice given by an acute writer was in consequence literally followed:—

“————— In resistless prose,  
Leave Burke *alone* to thunder on our foes.”

*Pursuits of Literature.*

It was therefore with great propriety in allusion to his power over public opinion even some years previous to the French Revolution, that Boswell, who knew him so well, in a pamphlet published in 1785, applied to him the words of Virgil—

Regum æquabat opes animis.

It was early remarked among his characteristics that to a perseverance not to be overcome, to the greatest original genius, and to extraordinary acquirements, he joined in the discussion of a subject unusual comprehensiveness of outline with minute knowledge and accuracy of detail.

What he says of Alfred the Great, in the *Essay on English History* (p. 297, 8vo. edit.) may, with strict truth, be applied to the distinguishing features of his own mind—“In a word, he comprehended in the greatness of his mind the whole of government and all its parts at once; and what is most difficult to human frailty, was at the same time sublime and minute.”

The reader of his works will be frequently led to appropriate this remark to him who made it, by observing his eagerness to embrace the whole of a subject, to leave no part of it unsifted, to place it in every variety of light, and to apply every possible illustration; to turn it back and front, inside and out, upside and down, so that no point likely to afford aid to the investigation of truth shall pass unexamined. This, which is one of the first merits of a fair disputant, was also his natural disposition. He cannot bear apparently, to blink or narrow a question, even when doing so, may be supposed favourable to his views, but sometimes

\* An anecdote of one of the ablest exhibits another instance of Mr. Burke's characteristic kindness. The present Serjeant Goold, of the Irish bar, then an aspiring but briefless barrister, excited by admiration of the “*Reflections on the Revolution in France*,” and of their great author, and then lately returned from Paris, where he had witnessed the *practical effects* of the new system of liberty, wrote a reply to several of Mr. Burke's assailants. At this time he was wholly unknown to the latter. Some time afterwards, however, he received in Dublin a letter from him, stating that he had not forgotten his obliging pamphlet, and that he begged leave to return the favour by giving him an introduction that might be serviceable to his interests; for Earl Fitzwilliam, the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, being to spend a few days with him at Beaconsfield before his departure, if he would come over and join the party, he might find the excursion neither unpleasant nor unprofitable. Mr. Goold, after some difficulty in raising the *materiel* for the journey, came, but too late; the society of such a man, however, well compensated the trouble; and he returned to Dublin with such letters of introduction as would have had due weight, had the noble Earl continued in that government.



gives the first hint of a difficulty in order to show his skill in overcoming it. It is contrary to the nature of the man to be pent up within a small compass; he must have room; give him vent or he continually threatens to explode and overwhelm you. He can no more be thrust up into the straitened corner of a subject—a trick which the practised debater and reasoner plays off on the more inexperienced—than you can squeeze an elephant into the cage of a parrot; for the cast of his frame is too ponderous, and his perceptions too acute, to submit to be caught in a trap which is commonly set to hamper the unwary. He seldom takes a topic in hand without so far exhausting it, that we find little interest, and frequently very little profit, in following any one else in the same track of argument.

One of his chief excellencies is in being an original and profound thinker. He continually strikes out something which is either new, or new in the connexion in which it stands, and has contrived to throw together more numerous and important political truths, intermixed with a great variety of moral truths drawn from acquaintance with the world, than any other writer on public affairs. The same profundity of thought which qualifies him to make so many discoveries in his progress, enables him also to dispel a variety of errors. He traces a proposition up to its source, and from its source through all its ramifications, so that if there be a fallacy in any part he is pretty sure to detect it. Axioms and opinions relative to our domestic politics, which were scarcely ever before doubted, are no sooner touched by him than they prove to be weak or questionable; several which might be mentioned he has wholly overthrown.

The desire thoroughly to clear the way before him, to afford the fullest information, and to leave nothing unexplained or unanswered, has given rise to the charge of his being diffuse. Diffuseness, however, implies something of weakness and verbosity; and he must be a hardy critic who shall venture to declare that these are in any degree characteristic of his writings. He may be full; unnecessarily so perhaps in the opinions of some, but this abundance presents ample matter for the exercise of the understanding; there is no accumulation of sentences to spin out a thought, no mere verbiage; but on all occasions a corresponding influx of ideas which open out great truths, enlarge the bounds or add to the particulars of knowledge, or unveil the latent springs of human passions and actions as they operate on those human institutions which so much of his life was employed in improving or defending; and they serve to make us not merely wiser politicians but much wiser men.

We rise from the perusal of his labours, satisfied that we have not spent our time in discussions merely applicable to temporary or party interests. There is a conviction of knowing what we did not know before, of feeling something which we did not before

feel, like permanent enlargement of mind; and this probably arises from the influence of that combination of qualities which constitute his peculiar greatness; by finding genius blended with knowledge; elegance of exposition with depth of thought; ingenuity with solidity; principles with facts; philosophy with practical politics; maxims of abstract wisdom, with those of his own experience among men; serving to bear upon, to illustrate, and to explain each other. To this task the mere politician, or the mere philosopher, would have been equally incompetent; it is the rare union of the characters which gives that degree of value to his writings so as to cause them to be quoted every night in both Houses of Parliament, as the greatest authority of our time. And this testimony cannot well be disputed as partial, since it is borne by Whigs and Tories, by Ministry and by Opposition, by all grades in political opinion—Lords Grenville, Londonderry, and Erskine—and by almost every other man of talents and celebrity, who have united (in this instance at least if in no other) to pronounce them, in their place in Parliament, immortal.

Their influence upon the public mind at large has long been admitted. To them we owe, not only much of that system of policy which has saved England and all Europe from that subjugation which France, whether influenced by National Convention, Directory, Consuls, or Emperor, has perseveringly attempted; but also the chief arguments in support of that policy urged in Parliament during the last twenty years. On a variety of other great questions of national interest, Mr. Burke's influence is nearly as great. He has anticipated much of what is daily urged on many of the most popular topics; while many even of the most brilliant passages, in the very best speeches in both Houses, whether in reasoning or in rhetorical art and address, are immediately obvious to the diligent reader of his works, as but repetitions of his thoughts and manner; sometimes in his own language, often with little variation, the speakers probably not aware at the moment of the source whence they borrow.

The same remark applies to several of our popular writers, miscellaneous as well as those devoted to the discussion of public affairs—pamphleteers, reviewers, and political essayists. His works form their chief stock in trade; the mine from which is dug out their most sterling ore; the aliment on which they exist; the bread, and beef, and wine on which they daily feed and fatten; his ideas dissected out of their connecting positions, and hashed up in some new form to suit the particular tastes of the writers, or the voracious appetite of the public for something new, and strong, and striking, but still substantially his ideas. Few of these persons, it may be added, have grace enough fully to acknowledge their obligations.

His phraseology is another characteristic and popular feature, on which contributions are levied in all the popular publications of

the age, to an extent of which many readers have little conception. They are often of a very original cast, unusually forcible, expressive, and often condense much meaning within a small compass. In the use of epithets he is too free and unguarded; they were mostly the offspring of vehement feeling in debate, but at any time, perhaps, form a weak point in oratory, as being open to the charge of exaggeration, or to contradiction, reprehension, and sometimes to ridicule.

He is almost the first of our writers (for Junius cannot be said to have preceded him) who has thrown the rays of genius and eloquence over political discussion; previous to his time, a political book, and a dull book, were nearly synonymous terms. Lord Bolingbroke's pieces form perhaps the only exception to this remark, though many do not admit him to be an exception, as his writings, political and philosophical, are now nearly forgotten; and he has neither that firm ground-work of truth, that vigour of reasoning or of language, that variety and splendour of genius, which Mr. Burke has employed in communicating abstract truth, and in discussing subjects not in themselves of the most enlivening description, but which acquire spirit and vivacity under his management; for while his argument clears the road, his flashes of genius and his wit enliven, his imagination adorns it. Scarcely any other man but himself could have produced such speeches as he has left us on the unpromising topics of economical Reform, and on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot.

A minute critic may find in his numerous writings traces of three, or even more, different sorts of styles, or shades of the same style, adapted no doubt, like a skilful rhetorician, to the nature of the topic on which he had to treat. The Letter to a Noble Lord, a considerable part of the Reflections on the Revolution in France, and large portions of his Speeches, may be taken as specimens of a highly poetical and impassioned style: the Thoughts on the Discontents, the Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, to Sir Hercules Langrishe, and others on Irish and French Affairs, with the Thoughts on Regicide Peace, and perhaps the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, as coming under the denomination of his middle style: the Charges against Mr. Hastings, which are drawn up with uncommon skill, the Addresses to the King, and to the Americans, on the proposed Secession from Parliament in 1777, the Historical Articles in the Annual Register for several years, and his Abridgment of English History, as his plainest or grave style. The Vindication of Natural Society, and the Account of the European Settlements in America, differ perhaps in some degree from each of these as well as from each other. And the short account of a Short Administration, and the Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, present a difference in manner from the whole of the others.

His letters, generally speaking, though with several exceptions,



belong to his plain style. In nothing are his powers more evident than in his correspondence, kept up for thirty years, with the most eminent men in the country, and with several foreigners of distinction, some of which have been already published, while others of high character are hereafter to appear; though few can be expected to exceed the letters to Barry. They partake generally of much of the instructive character of his writings, and of the same force of observation, though often expressed with more elegance than he employs in his publications; some of them, without losing any thing of epistolary ease, amount almost to disquisitions on the subjects on which they touch, especially on public affairs, and on criticism. In vivacity, which many esteem the chief recommendation of a familiar letter-writer, he is deficient, evidently not from want of power, but of inclination to deal in mere pleasantries upon paper; his aim was rather to inform than to amuse.

Allusions have been already made in this work, to a vulgar though frequent error—frequent at least among those who know little of the original, or who, possessing little critical discrimination, confound two things essentially different—that his style is flowery. Not only is this not the case, but it may be questioned whether it can be called an ornamented style, all the common characters of such a style, as it is exhibited by others, being at variance with those peculiarities which distinguish the productions of Mr. Burke. If a definition be required of its nature, it will be difficult to give this without periphrasis, but it may be termed an impassioned style, the product of ardent genius and strong feeling, studded with some bold figures, not laid on for the sake of ornament, but springing out of the intensity of his conceptions; meant not to adorn, but to convey a more perfect image to the mind. Of these figures much is occasionally said; yet they are on the whole less remarkable for number, than for a certain daring originality of feature not to be found in any other orator, and in none of our poets, except in some of the most sublime conceptions of *Paradise Lost*; and their effect usually is to sink deep into the mind, and to be recalled by memory as things worthy of recollection, when the same idea expressed in common language, would have been forgotten probably as soon as heard. A figure, therefore, such as Burke commonly uses, is wholly distinct in its nature from mere ornament; it may rather be considered an appeal to the judgment through the attractive medium of the imagination. In the conception, he aims much less at the beautiful, than at the great, the striking, and the sublime; often he is eminently happy in their nature, and in their use; now and then, though rarely, rather strained; occasionally coarse or unseemly; but always forcible.

He deals occasionally, but not offensively, in antithesis; rather sparingly in climax; sometimes in personification and apostrophe; in interrogatory he is often powerful; but his taste in pursuing a simile too far may at times afford matter for dispute. His favourite

and most brilliant figure is metaphor, and in this he is frequently amenable to the laws of criticism from its being imperfect or broken; offending in this way, like all great and original minds, against the strict canons of art, yet overpowering them all by his genius. An instance of this mingled beauty and imperfection may be taken at random. He is alluding to the bickerings with America, excited by Mr. George Grenville, whose character he is sketching, and whom he represents to have understood more of business and of the forms of office on common occasions, than of enlarged and prudent policy on great emergencies—

“ These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions, and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well as long as things go on in their common order; *but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters are out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent*, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and a far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite, than ever office gave, or than office can ever give.” Public discontent and confusion overspreading the country like a vast inundation, effacing all former beacons for the guidance of its rules, and leaving the judgment to its own unassisted efforts, is a noble idea; but something of metaphorical propriety and grandeur is lost by being joined to the literal reality of the “*file of office*.”

An instance of strained metaphor has been already partially quoted in allusion to what he thought the over-done economy of Mr. Pitt, in some regulations proposed in 1785—“ He (Mr. Pitt) chooses to suppose (for he does not pretend more than to suppose) a naked possibility that he shall draw some resource out of crumbs dropped from the trenchers of penury; that something shall be laid in store from the short allowance of revenue officers overloaded with duty, and famished for want of bread; by a reduction from officers, who are at this very hour ready to batter the Treasury with what breaks through stone walls, for an increase of their appointments. From the marrowless bones of these skeleton establishments, *by the use of every sort of cutting, and of every sort of fretting tool, he flatters himself that he may chip and rasp an empirical alimentary powder, to diet into some similitude of health and substance the languishing chimeras of fraudulent reformation.*” The metaphorical allusions in the first sentence of this passage are unobjectionable and forcible, while in the second they pass into the simile, and appear constrained and unnatural, though applicable to every part of the character he had given of the bill in the previous portion of his speech. This instance of extravagant simile, selected for its objectionable nature, may however be considered as scarcely fair towards his reputation, as it is the most constrained in his works.

Trivial imperfections of this kind, amid numberless specimens remarkable for fitness and correctness, detract little from the merit

of an orator ; abstracted from the subject they may be open to objection, but taken along with it few readers think them worthy of notice, and fewer still would wish them expunged. An imperfect metaphor forms indeed fine food for the indignation of the critic, who fastens upon the unhappy offender as he would upon a thief caught in the act of purloining his property, and commonly handles him with little less mercy. But, after all, it may be doubted whether much of this critical horror does not partake of the character of learned trifling ; for if we appeal to experience, to the facts furnished every day by the intercourse of life and business, we find that though metaphors are in continual use by all ranks of people, few of them when examined are critically perfect. To be so, they mostly require to be studied, and the most beautiful require it the most. In extemporaneous oratory, such as we usually hear in the British Senate, this is not to be expected. He who would stop in the career of his argument to labour a metaphor with minute point and polish, might gain the reputation of a sensitive critic, but he would probably gain no other. Few writers, perhaps, would desire to see their ideas submitted to the world in their first words, and still greater allowances require to be made for the orator.

A charge has been brought against him from high authority (Dugald Stewart, Esq.) that, though confessedly one of the greatest masters of the English language, he often debases his style by the intermixture of cant and colloquial words and allusions. The fact of such intermixture may be true, but a different inference may be drawn from their use ; it is but fair at least, before we wholly condemn his practice, to consider his object.

Having sometimes to address a popular assembly, intelligent, and well educated indeed, but still essentially popular, and at other times the public at large through the medium of the press, upon topics which intimately concerned the welfare of all, and with which all were, or fancied they were, acquainted, he aimed, as already hinted, at being strong rather than dignified ; bold, clear, and intelligible, rather than refined ; mastering their opinions by his power rather than by his elegance ; omitting nothing which he thought might influence them, and for this purpose calling in the aid of the most familiar, perhaps homely, associations. Like Swift, another of our most powerful writers, he was determined at whatever cost or sacrifice, though he never like him descends to gross abuse and coarseness, to make a deep and indelible impression. He conceived deeply and felt strongly, and would not weaken the force of his first ideas, by any thing like squeamishness of expression ; he was too prone perhaps to the use of the vulgar tongue in occasionally ill-chosen epithets, though not in sentiment. Oratory, however, has a license in language which is denied to history, to criticism, to judicial statements and investigations, or to the philosophical treatise ; in the former, therefore, if his taste, judged by



his own practice, be often faulty, the error probably arose from an exaggerated idea of his privilege, as under the other heads just mentioned, his *History*, the *Essay on the Sublime*, and the *Articles of Charge* against Mr. Hastings, the style is unobjectionable; in the latter indeed it is so precise and appropriate, that though occupying an octavo volume and a half, I do not remember (what many, from the common idea, entertained of Mr. Burke, will scarcely believe) meeting with but one or two metaphorical allusions, and nothing that can be considered too familiar or colloquial.

It is likewise urged, and probably with more force, that he is too liberal in the use of terms borrowed from art and science, as these, though serving to give variety to imagery, may not be so universally intelligible to the mass of readers. It is rare, however, that they are beyond general comprehension; but he certainly levies upon all professions and occupations without scruple; upon the divine, the moralist, the philosopher, the physician, the astronomer, the chemist, the mathematician, the lawyer, the surgeon, the farmer, the soldier, the seaman, and many others, down even to the baker and butcher, instances of all of which may be collected from his works. His nautical allusions, which were gleaned probably from Lord Keppel, Sir Charles Saunders, and other intimate naval friends, are not only numerous, but are applied with more propriety than a landsman can usually accomplish; as in "trimming the ship," in "heaving the lead every inch of way I made," a metaphor strongly expressive of the care and caution exerted upon the economical Reform bill; in lawyers (who are said to bend their eyes by instinct on the peerage) "casting their best bower-anchor in the House of Lords," and a great variety of others. In surgery, the terms "solution of continuity," and "working off the slough of slavery," may not be so easily understood by the unprofessional, as "the broad-cast swing of the arm" of the farmer, and the supposed questions of the agrarian butchers of the Duke of Bedford's acres—"how he cuts up?" "how he tallows in the cawl or on the kidneys?"

Another resource for his exuberant genius was the use of scriptural phraseology, which was applied to political circumstances with too much freedom, though certainly without the least idea of irreverence, but to those who did not know him or make allowance for his sallies, conveying something of that impression; as in calling Lord Hillsborough's Letter to the Colonies during the disputes, "a canonical book of ministerial scripture,—the epistle general to the Americans;" "it is good for us to be here;" "brother Lazarus is not dead, but sleepeth;" and many more of a similar description. If the language of sacred writ be ever admissible in general discussions—and the propriety of the practice is very doubtful—it is perhaps least objectionable when used by a great orator on a great occasion, affecting the general interests of nations, or of large bodies of the community, and when neither the speaker

nor the subject is likely to degrade it. Lord Chatham used it frequently. To any one indeed who has a proper relish for a high order of literary beauty, it requires some self-denial not to seize upon phrases which seem to stand so opportunely in the way; for they recur continually to the memory, they are in themselves often sublime, always expressive, and have the advantage of being universally familiar.

Add this error, however, to his other literary sins, to "his prolific imagination, which (in the language of Mr. Pitt) had so long been the wonder and pleasure of the House," to his irregular or broken figures, to his occasional dallying with his subject, to the too frequent use of terms of art, to his frequent invective, to the introduction of undignified and colloquial expressions—and to how little do they all amount? On the other hand, where shall we find among orators or statesmen so much depth and originality of thought, fulness of information, variety of diction, vigour of expression, bold and sublime imagery; so much of grandeur\* and energy of eloquence, or of beautiful and impressive writing?

#### HIS LEADING PUBLIC PRINCIPLES.

As a statesman, Mr. Burke's distinguishing policy is to be traced in his speeches and writings. These, as forming a valuable manual for reference to future legislators and ministers of the country, will be consulted for the opinions which they teach, and the difficulties they tend to solve, for their vigour and eloquence as compositions, for clear and enlarged views on great constitutional questions, for a thorough acquaintance with the duties of rulers and subjects in their various relations of obedience and control. To all his ideas on these points universal assent may not be given, nor was their justice always admitted at the time. But experience has proved they were grounded in sound judgment, and in a penetrating and prospective spirit—the first qualities beyond all others for those who fill public stations, and for the want of which no others can compensate—and in a wisdom not abstruse or perplexed, but in its application obvious and easy.

It was peculiar to him—one of the many distinctions which belonged to his character—that, possessed of a fancy and imagination singularly brilliant, of vast stores of knowledge, of a liberal and philosophical turn of mind, added to having passed much time among books—all the elements which unite to compose a beautiful system-maker and imposing theorist, produced

\* "Junius," somewhere observes an acute critic (Mr. Hazlitt), who will not be suspected of undue partiality to Mr. Burke, "is the first of his class, but that class is not the highest. Junius's manner is the strut of a petit-maitre, Burke's the stalk of a giant; if grandeur is not to be found in Burke, it is to be found nowhere."

in him a directly opposite effect. He would admit of no innovating speculations into the business of government. He was, if any man was, a practical man. He professed to build, as the wise of all times have done, upon the basis of history and experience. "I prefer the collective wisdom of ages," said he, alluding to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, "to the abilities of any two men living;" but this would have done little for his fame, without that happy conformation of mind to enable him to discriminate the nature of the deductions to be drawn from it; between what to apply to use, and what was inapplicable. He entertained for ancient institutions that respect and admiration which all sober minds feel when these institutions have been productive of good; and as long as the effects continued the same, he disapproved of attempts to alter the practice.

His aim therefore, in our domestic policy, was to preserve all our institutions, in the main, as they are; for the simple reason that under them the nation had become great, and prosperous, and happy. It was not his desire that we should shut our eyes to abuse—his whole life, he said, had been spent in resisting and repealing abuses—but to amend deliberately and cautiously; to innovate not at all, for innovation was not reformation; to overturn nothing which had the sanction of time and many happy days in its favour; to correct and perfect the superstructures, but to leave all the foundations, the antiquity of which formed a guarantee of their usefulness and stability in the general opinion, sacred and unharmed. "The love of things ancient," says Hooker, "doth argue staycdness; but levity and want of experience maketh apt unto innovations." Bacon thought time the great innovator; Mr. Burke seemed to think that in the nice connexion between the supreme governing authority and the people, he was the chief, or the only one, who could act without exciting jealousy on the one part or on the other. He did not regard a form of government as necessarily good, because it was plausible upon paper, but rather looked to its actual workings; to its effects rather than to its nominal merits; to benefit to the people as it was obvious to the sense, rather than to perfection in the theories on which it was believed to be founded. He believed that no material or abrupt deviation in the established constitution, or in the mode of governing a community, could take place without danger; and the event of the first great political struggle in which he was engaged, evinced the accuracy of this opinion. His constant admonition to England respecting America was—"Talk not of your abstract rights of government; I hate the very sound of them; follow experience and common sense; desist from the innovation you are now attempting; do as you have always done before, in permitting her to tax herself; and in all ordinary circumstances of the world the



effects will be the same—namely, peace, security, and attachment.”\*

This minute attention to the uses and habits which unite governors and governed, and of which the veneration he expressed for the component parts of our constitution, formed a natural part, although represented by the party to whom he stood opposed in 1791 as the effects of a narrow and fettered system which he had formed for himself, will by others be deemed the strongest proof of enlarged wisdom. The natural frame of his politics indeed was of the most expanded cast. He always contended for a liberal and conciliatory line of conduct in national questions, a disregard of small and temporary benefits for the sake of great and permanent interests; seeming to think that England had lost, and might again be a loser by selfishness, but never had sustained injury by her kindness and generosity. For this reason he would not run the risk of losing the American Continent for the sake of a revenue, which, even if acquired, he early perceived could be no more than nominal. In the same spirit, he called for concession to the Irish legislature—to her oppressed and restricted commerce—and to her vast body of Roman Catholic subjects from the disabilities under which they laboured; for justice and future security to the people of India; for liberty of conscience to the dissenters; for the relief of small debtors; for the suppression of general warrants; for the abolition of negro slavery as a trade, and for the better treatment of those who were in the islands; for the extension of the power of juries; for the liberty of publishing the parliamentary debates; for the re-establishment of Mr. Wilkes in his seat for Middlesex; for the enactment of Mr. Grenville's most useful bill, regulating controverted elections, which met with much unaccountable opposition, and found in Mr. Burke one of its ablest supporters; for the Nullum Tempus Act, securing the property of the subject against dormant claims of the crown; for another which he endeavoured to carry against similar claims of the church; for retrenching the public expenditure without parsimony toward public servants and services, or infringing upon the dignity of the crown; for a more unrestrained system of commercial intercourse; for a more generous policy towards France and the French princes in the earlier part of the war than Mr. Pitt was

\* An eminent American, talking not long ago to an acquaintance of Mr. Burke, said, “Had the advice of your illustrious friend been followed at the beginning of our contest, I do not positively say that America at this day would have been yours, though in very wise hands, and with concessions to her trade and advancing knowledge, even this might have been possible. But I am very sure that our separation would have been more easy, more imperceptible, more good humoured; and possibly we might have been afterwards linked together by mutual interests as strongly as by dominion. Burke would have saved your country much bloodshed, above one hundred millions of money, and, more than that, have prevented a hostile feeling between the nations which may now never be allayed.”

inclined to show; and in innumerable other instances on record; all indicating love to popular interests, and to the most enlarged and liberal views. In most of these questions his understanding may be said to have assumed the post of honour—that is, it did not follow, but rather led the public voice. He had, in fact, an unfeigned contempt for statesmen without “large, liberal, and prospective views,” for what he called “mechanical politicians,” and “pedlar principles.” “Littleness in object and in means,” said he, seeming to hint at some of the Ministry, or their connexions, in 1796, “to them appears soundness and sobriety. They think there is nothing worth pursuit but that which they can handle; which they can measure with a two-foot rule; which they can tell upon ten fingers.”

As it has been frequently maintained that he ultimately swerved from those principles of freedom with which he set out in political life, a re-perusal of his earlier writings, and a fair induction from his general arguments, will convince us that at no period did he assume the character of what is called a flaming patriot, having on the contrary early declared in the House of Commons “that being warned by the ill effects of a contrary procedure in great examples (he had the Earl of Bath, and some others, in his eye at the moment) “he had taken his ideas of liberty very low; in order that they should stick to him, and that he might stick to them to the end of his life.” Averse, therefore, from professions of patriotism, few statesmen paid more attention to the substance; and in pursuing what he thought the true interests of the country, never very eagerly sought, and perhaps never much valued, popular applause; especially if to obtain it required the sacrifice of a single principle, or a point of sound wisdom. He did not seem so much openly to despise, as tacitly to consider present popularity as a species of approbation which does not always, nor even generally, extend its influence to the page of history, where alone the deserts of a great man are justly balanced, and receive their due reward. In the eyes of many he was, so far as his personal interests were concerned, over-tenacious in never surrendering his own to the popular opinion.

The same enlightened patriotism, superior to all party considerations, which proffered support to government during the riots in 1780, “when (as he says) wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods, and prowled about our streets in the name of reform,” brought him forward with irresistible power in the still more fearful crisis produced by the great convulsion in a neighbouring country. There was at all times a gallant spirit, a kind of old-fashioned generosity about the opinions and character, both public and private, of Burke, which, whenever he saw one branch of the constitution, or any one order of the community, pressed down or threatened by the others, made him fling himself into the lighter scale, to restore, if possible, the

equipoise. Such was his conduct on this most important of all occasions. He thought it his duty to stand in the breach, even if alone; to reason, and if necessary, to contend with his former political companions who seemed to be misled beyond the line of prudence by the enthusiasm of the moment; to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober; to pronounce aloud the warning voice to the people at large should they labour under the same delusion; to point out the mischiefs which, not their neutrality merely, but their good sense and decided hostility were required to prevent. The results of these endeavours were a violent clamour against him for assaulting the cause of liberty. What species of liberty it was which he is said to have assaulted, is never ventured to be explained, but it is necessary that the reader should know it was that of France in 1793. What the liberty was which he defended and approved is more obvious, for he has told us pretty explicitly—that it was English liberty—it was that system of things which secured to every order in the state, to the monarchy, to the aristocracy, and to the people, and to every person within those orders, the full enjoyment of as many rights, as full security, and as much freedom of action as was consistent with the same rights, the same security, and the same freedom of action, to every other order and individual.

For reprobating the former, and supporting the latter system, he was accused of inconsistency, as if between the practice of France and the practice of England there prevailed the slightest affinity—wide as vice and virtue, as wrong and right asunder. The distinction which he drew between them, and the election which he made of the latter, required no efforts of subtlety, but were the ordinary results of sound sense and a clear understanding. Attached to the monarchy from principle and from conviction, and brought forward in life by the aristocracy, he professed for both a warm, though not a “slavish respect,” and in the moment of need did them service which never can be repaid, and which ought never to be forgotten. As one sprang from the middle rank of the people, he wished to preserve that rank also as well as the others, respectable, unawed by the tyranny (as in France) of the mob. Sincere in the veneration of religion, he contemplated the spoliation of its institutions first, and subsequent extinction as a principle of belief in that country, with horror. Exemplary in the performance of his social and moral duties, he could not see them involved in the general ruin of every thing decent and valuable, without the strongest indignation. He was arrived too at an age when the judgment, in matters of government, is out of the reach of crude schemes, and more juvenile follies; when the lust of innovation, if it has ever prevailed in the mind, is cooled by the calculations of experience. His practical knowledge of states, and governments, and the conflicting interests and passions of politicians, had been laboriously earned,



his observation had been keen, his powers to combine, analyse, and deduce important truths from the contemplation of the whole, great as it appeared, beyond example. Looking at such a man in the abstract, without previously knowing what part he *did* take, no doubt could be entertained of the part he *would* take.

After all, the greatest and most useful of his many gifts was that capacity to point out consequences, which, stretching itself beyond even wisdom, became almost prescience. In this point he stands alone; no other statesman has approached him, or is likely so to do, in the exercise of the same faculty. His predictions, though so numerous and various, and which at first, by their boldness, afforded matter for surprise, became, by their fulfilment to the letter in almost every instance, a subject of general astonishment; though the French Revolution was by no means the first occasion on which this quality was developed. An attentive inquirer will find it marked in most of the great events of his public life.

He lived just long enough to find himself acknowledged the prince of political prophets; to see the reprobation he had ventured to pass on the most remarkable event of modern times more than justified by the horrid scenes to which it had given rise; to confirm the body of the nation in the belief that it had acted wisely, and to convince many of the opposite party that their judgment had been wrong. Had he even erred in estimating the dangers which threatened our own institutions, it would be difficult to blame his caution. A government like that of England, commonly upright in design, in the main pure in practice, and under which the people have become great, free, and prosperous beyond all example, is entitled to our best exertions in moments of peril, notwithstanding the existence of a few trivial defects or errors, which after all, interfere with no fundamental right of the people, and which it is easier to point out than to remedy. The fabric of all constitutions, and perhaps of our own especially, is valuable only when the materials which compose it are in close union; disunited they are nearly valueless. It was the praise of Mr. Burke to tie them more closely at a moment when the mistakes of some, and the designs of others, threatened to sever them for ever; and by this one merit, which is only one item in a long list of public services, has left a name as imperishable as the country which he saved and adorned.

Let it be supposed on the other hand that his mind had been less happily regulated, that his wisdom or patriotism had been less enlarged, that he had fallen in with the views of the theorists and the mob, in order to render them a stepping-stone to place, or even to the perpetration of criminal schemes; that deluded by a spirit of insane ambition he had led the van, supported by Paine and so many hundreds of other incendiaries and dreamers of no ordinary rank and talents, to batter down the venerable institutions

of the land in expectation of rising upon the ruins,—there is perhaps little doubt but he might have accomplished such designs. With all his assistance, the struggle against such persons and principles was arduous. But with his energies exerted on the contrary side, we should now probably have no constitution to find fault with, and no country, not an independent one at least, to claim.

As a minister, for the short time he was in office, he was, as we have seen, punctual, laborious, and disinterested in an unusual degree. His reform bill was the most important measure carried through parliament during the century, whether we consider the actual saving of money, the regulation of office, or the abolition of places which might have been rendered sources of undue influence, or at any rate of suspicion, in the votes of thirty-six members of the House of Commons—a number almost sufficient of themselves to form a House. That he would have displayed a different spirit if placed in a more leading department of government, there is no reason to believe; his integrity of purpose was never questioned. It is possible he might not have been popular. He showed too much zeal in urging favourite measures; and zeal in the eyes of the million is suspicious. He did not at all times consult expediency. He exhibited occasionally too much candour in disclosing the whole of his views in public propositions of moment, while other persons in power, with less of courage or more of management, thought it more prudent to let them slide into the world, like ill-news, piecemeal. And having never adopted a measure of great consequence, except after intense consideration and the clearest conviction of its being right, he could not perhaps have yielded with a very good grace to public opinion, had it set in ever so strongly in the contrary way.

MR. BURKE, MR. PITT, MR. FOX.

It may be an object of inquiry among those who look minutely to development of mind, to estimate the relative capacity and powers which these three great statesmen and orators displayed during their career, and the rank which they are likely to hold upon the roll of history. No formal parallel, however, will be attempted to be drawn here; each has his partizans, and each certainly possesses peculiar merits of his own. But as it is not the pre-eminence of one or two faculties, but the general results of various excellence, that forms the criterion by which great men are usually judged and compared by posterity, so as in this view Cicero has been awarded the superiority among the Romans, and perhaps may also excel the first of the Greeks, Mr. Burke is pretty certain to take the same stand among the moderns. At present indeed, political feelings and partialities may tempt many to question this; for he is yet too near our own time. His great competitors have besides left their names as watch-words and

rallying points to two great parties in the state, who, influenced by a sense of party honour and consequence, claim the same distinction each for its particular leader. But party feelings, at least towards individuals, seldom outlive the generation they influence. A century, or less, completely dissolves the spell. Men begin then to look around them for some better evidences of desert than the possession of temporary power or popularity furnish.\* Fame indeed is a capricious offering; Milton had little or no reputation as a poet while he lived, and for years afterwards; Dryden did not possess more of it than some other writers, his contemporaries, whose names are now sunk in utter obscurity; several men have almost governed our House of Commons during their day, whose claim to such distinction no one now acknowledges; Mirabeau ruled the National Assembly of France, yet what historian will venture to class him among the good, or the truly great? Even Demosthenes and Cicero during their lives only divided public applause with rivals in reputation whom none would now think of placing in comparison; and such it is almost certain will be the fate of Burke.

No man has excelled, or possibly equalled Mr. Pitt in the management of the Cabinet, in a tact for business, in finance, in that uncommon dexterity which adapting itself, though without subserviency, at once to the wishes of the sovereign, and to the fluctuating feelings of the public, never, during so long a period of time, lost the confidence of either. His powers were only exceeded by his prudence.

In no point of ability could Mr. Fox be deemed inferior, and in bursts of overpowering eloquence was considered often to have the advantage. But more particularly as a popular idol, as one born to lead a formidable party in Parliament, and to extract out of casual political coadjutors devoted and enthusiastic personal friends, he stood alone, and far above all other men. Mr. Burke never did, and Mr. Pitt, had it been his lot to labour during his life in the ungracious work of Opposition, never could have approached to an equality with him in this respect. His only wants, perhaps, were that caution and moderation in which Mr. Pitt excelled.

Mr. Burke, on the other hand, in addition to displaying an equality with them in their most distinguished political characteristics, possessed other and various powers to which they had little pretension; and considering that he had to fight his way in the House of Commons, from comparative obscurity, through vexatious jealousies and difficulties which never thwarted the career of his great competitors, and buoyed up solely by his talents, he may be said to have accomplished much more than they did for fame.

\* "Even now," says a writer who does not overload him with praise, "while the ashes of Fox and Pitt are yet warm, and their eloquence may be said yet to sound in our ears, how much more are the speeches of Burke read, how much more of them is generally remembered."



A few, and but a few, of his principles of policy have been noticed in this work; the detail belongs to the history of the country, and would require a larger volume than the present to itself. They embraced, during a period of thirty years, the whole of our foreign, colonial, and domestic relations, under every variety of form and situation; his views extremely clear, more enlarged sometimes than those of Mr. Pitt,—more precise and accurate than those of Mr. Fox; and though it is not meant to claim for him infallibility, no statesman who took so decided a part on such a multiplicity of subjects has committed so few mistakes. It would be a hazardous matter to point out any gift or capacity, as a statesman, in which Mr. Burke was deficient; in foresight, the first and most important of all, he confessedly far excelled his great contemporaries, and all his predecessors.

The same superiority belongs to him in most of the natural and acquired powers necessary to constitute a great orator; and this is not merely the verdict of the *critic* in his study, but he actually exhibited a power over his *audience*, sometimes in the House of Commons, and more than once in Westminster Hall, to which they never attained. “For remarkable passages,” observes the able historian of the impeachment, “separable from their novelty, or their striking original importance in idea or diction, Mr. Burke is the mighty master. Those of Mr. Fox were not so distinguished.”—In the speeches of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox there is, beyond all question, a great deal of common place,—much of which very ordinary men would say on similar occasions; but it is difficult to read a page or two of Burke, and not feel a conviction that his speeches belong to another and to a higher order of intellect. The oratory of his competitors was often inferior to his in the extent of information it conveyed, and almost always in new and forcible illustration. It was inferior likewise in not impressing the mind with the same feeling of the enlarged wisdom of the speaker; also in wit and ridicule; in pathos; in imagery; in force of invective, an useful, but sometimes dangerous power; and more than all, it was inferior in that kindling of genius called by the critics the eloquence of passion, and which they deem essentially necessary to great success. In ordinary business his powers were perhaps less conspicuous than in affairs of importance; his speeches on the latter occasions imparted something like the idea of an ocean of mind, at once deep and boundless. He did not latterly engage in, or like, the common routine of opposition, but, as has been said of Shakspeare, he was always great when a great occasion called for it.

If in so many requisites, which go to the formation of a distinguished political character, we find Mr. Burke on a level, or above his great rivals in public life, there are others of no slight moment in which comparison tells to their disadvantage.

As a writer, it is scarcely necessary to advert to his vast supe-

riority. Mr. Pitt, indeed, did not seriously contend for the honours of the press. Mr. Fox composed slowly and with labour, very unlike his mode of speaking, sometimes complaining of the difficulty of the process as almost vexatious. Mr. Burke was rapid in composition, though patient in a much greater degree than is common with men of genius, in careful revision, and, independent of mere literary execution, there are more traces of vigour of thought, and ingenuity and originality of mind in any one of his pamphlets, than in Mr. Fox's history. In the extent of his general knowledge he excelled them both. As a man of general genius (Sir Joshua Reynolds certainly had him in his eye in the definition of that quality), who seemed capable of surpassing in any pursuit to which he chose to devote his attention, he excelled them. As a philosophical critic, the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* places him far above them; and in that general truth of deduction from experience and from appearances, whether in the moral, natural, or political world, which constitutes the philosopher, his superiority is equally incontestable. In powers of conversation he far excelled them. In a fine and correct taste for the arts he excelled them. In classical learning he was at least on a par with them; and in classical criticism, though Mr. Fox was an excellent critic, he had perhaps the advantage in depth and ingenuity. Even in epistolary communication, which forms the business of some men, and the occasional occupation of all, the same marked superiority over his great rivals, whether in the familiar letter or the more formal exposition of public business, is as obvious as in any other of his talents. Of his pre-eminence over Mr. Fox, with whom he has been more particularly compared in the various excellence constituting a very great man, Dr. Johnson, with characteristic precision, stated his conviction in a single sentence: "Sir," said he, alluding to some political opinions of Sir Joshua Reynolds, "he is too much under the influence of the Fox (dog) *star*, and the Irish *constellation*." Among politicians he will be considered to be what Michael Angelo is among artists.

Viewed in whatever light, he must always be considered a most extraordinary man—extraordinary in his talents, in his acquirements, in his rise, in his progress, and in his end; for the last efforts of his mind rise in power and in brilliancy over almost any of the preceding. He lived in a momentous time, and seemed made for such an occasion by the delight he felt in strong excitements, and the splendour of the exertions to which they gave rise. He may be considered in politics what the great reformers were in religion—possessed of zeal, powers, and perseverance, altogether boundless, to influence at favourable moments the minds of men from their customary channels of thought to such as he deemed more consistent with truth and public advantage. He was peculiarly fitted for being the great presiding genius of

a country, and his great contemporaries should have been his ministers. *He* should have originated measures, and they should have carried them into execution. Public servants, as able as they were, and (if that be any criterion of merit) infinitely more successful, have been often seen in the world, but it has required two thousand years to produce one Cicero and one Burke. Great as his fame is, it is not probably near its height; calculated as he is, in the various characters of statesman, orator, and writer, to descend to a late period of time; to gain in reputation as he recedes from the fleeting animosities and prejudices of the day; and perhaps to excite regret and surprise that we should have had among us the great master-spirit in political prophesying and teaching, and not oftener have profited by his admonitions.

“If we are to praise a man in proportion to his usefulness,” says a distinguished German writer, whose volumes are admired throughout Europe, “I am persuaded that no task can be more difficult than that of doing justice to another Englishman, his (Sir W. Jones’s) contemporary, the Statesman and Orator Burke. This man has been to his own country and to all Europe—in a very particular manner to Germany—a new light of political wisdom and moral experience. He corrected his age when it was at the height of its revolutionary frenzy; and without maintaining any system of philosophy he seems to have seen farther into the true nature of society, and to have more clearly comprehended the effect of religion in connecting individual security with national welfare, than any philosopher, or any system of philosophy, of any preceding age.”\*

“This I deliberately and steadily affirm,” writes a learned man more than once quoted, after an animated eulogy on him as a critic and philosopher, “that of all the men who are, or who ever have been, eminent for energy or splendour of eloquence, or for skill and grace in composition, there is not one who, in genius or erudition, in philanthropy or piety, or in any of the qualities of a wise and good man, surpasses Burke.”

“If,” said Mr. Fox, in opening the first charge of the impeachment, and the allusion to Mr. Burke was rapidly caught by the auditory, “If we are no longer in shameful ignorance of India; if India no longer makes us blush in the eyes of Europe; let us know and feel our OBLIGATIONS to HIM—whose admirable resources of opinion and affection—whose untiring toil, sublime genius, and high aspiring honour, raised him up conspicuous among the most beneficent worthies of mankind!”

“To whom,” said Sheridan in his happier moments, before the false lights of French liberty misled him, “I look up with homage, whose genius is commensurate to his philanthropy, whose memory will stretch itself beyond the fleeting objects of any little,

\* Schlegel’s Lectures on Literature, vol. ii., p. 278.



partial, temporary shuffling, through the whole range of human knowledge and honourable aspirations after human good, as large as the system which forms life, as lasting as those objects which adorn it;" "a gentleman whose abilities, happily for the glory of the age in which we live, are not intrusted to the perishable eloquence of the day, but will live to be the admiration of that hour when all of us shall be mute, and most of us forgotten."

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